

ART AND CULTURE OF NORTH-EAST INDIA

L.P. VIDYARTHI



North-East region, a vital entity of great Indian land has been in the limelight in spite of being geographically in the extreme corner of the country. In the recent times by virtue of being a major source of oil, tea, forest produce and medicinal herbs, the region has acquired special importance for India. Dominantly mountainous, North-East forms natural walls separating India from adjacent lands. The mighty river Brahmaputra with several tributaries, apart from being a great gift of fertility and civilization for India has also proved a great integrating force uniting North-East with national mainstream.

Here is a book that gives fair account of origin, history, rich cultural heritage, customs, traditions and beliefs of various tribes now settled in different parts of North-East. The author has paid well deserved attention to various segments of the region and concentrated on past researches, the life, economic conditions, occupational patterns, arts and crafts, traditional dormitories and inherent concepts, dresses, entertainment and rapidly changing cultural and economic scene of the North-East.

With supporting photographs these accounts will enrich the knowledge and delight the readers as they derive their authenticity from personal observations of the author.

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Preface

The Himalayas and the Culture of Himalayan region have always fascinated me, and it was in 1964 that I did my first fieldwork in the different parts of Western, Central and North-Eastern Himalayas. Since then I have been paying frequent visits and conducting field researches. My interest culminated in the establishment of the Centre of Himalayan studies at Ranchi in 1979, under the aegis of which two National Symposia were also organised, one at Ranchi in 1981 and the other at Dehradun in 1982 on Himalayan Ecology, Economy and Religion.

It was in view of this long standing interest that I accepted the offer of Publications Division of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, to write a book on the Art and Culture of the North-East India. I then, intensified my visits to the region, doing both field researches and library work as well as participating in series of seminars held at Gauhati, Dibrugarh, Shillong and Kohima etc.

I was benefited not only from the feedbacks in the seminars, but also through prolonged discussions and exchange of ideas with professors B.M. Das, M.C. Goswami, and Dr. D.N. Mazumdar of Gauhati University. Professor A.C. Bhagwati of Dibrugarh, Dr. Parul Dutta of Folklore Research Centre, and Mr. Bordoli, Director, Tribal Research Institute, Gauhati. To them I express my thanks.

The discussion I had with Mr. L.P., Singh, I.C.S. (Rtd.) Ex Governor of North-Eastern States and Dr. B.D. Sharma, Vice-Chancellor, NEHU, also enlightened me a lot. The help and co-operation extended to me by Mr. M. Alemehiba of Naga Institute of Culture, Kohima and Professor B.B. Kumar of Science College, Kohima were also great and I offer my thanks to them. Professor B.B. Kumar also deserves mention for action as guest editor of the special number of Journal of Social Research exclusively devoted to the Naga group of people of North Eastern India. The papers received on different aspects of Naga people have also proved helpful in preparing the book.

I am grateful to Sri S.K. Choudhary, I.F.S. (Retd.) who patiently went through the manuscript and made scholarly suggestions.

I am thankful to Dr. A.K. Haldar and Mr. L.P. Prasad for their help in various stages of preparation of this book. The research team of Anthropology Department, Ranchi University particularly Dr. Y.K. Jaiswal and Mr. M. Nirula also deserve commendation for their intensive fieldwork in Nagaland, and providing me with latest 'field feel', at the time of completion of the book.

I am thankful to the Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta, particularly its North-East station, Shillong and Dr. A.K. Danda, Acting Director of the A.S.I. who provided me many facilities as well as rare photographs. Mr. A. Hossain of Shillong also deserves my appreciation for equipping me with unique photographs.

The Publications Division of the government of India particularly Dr. S.S. Shashi, Director, has shown extraordinary patience in renewing the contracts and for reminding me from time to time to complete the work. lastly, I thank Mr. Ramautar Prasad and Mr. M.S.N. Nair, who typed and retyped the script.

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Chapter I

Researches on Art and Culture in North-East India

Due to importance of the North-Eastern Region of India from the point of view of tribal administration, the colonial scholars and anthropologists were greatly attracted to study the land and the people. This area was so different and distinct in terms of customs, manners and values that the British colonial administrators found it essential to know the people whom they were to rule. All these attracted not only the administrators, but the military personnel, travellers, missionaries, tea planters and a few others to this land of colourful tribes. During the formative period (1872-1921) a number of persons wrote about the tribes of this region, which were mainly published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, founded in 1774.

NOTES ON TRIBES

Among the early scholars mention may be made of Robinson¹, an educationist and philologist who published notes on a series of dialects about Khamtis, Konyak, Singhpo, Doka and Mishmi. In a series of chapters running into 436 pages, Robinson describes the geographical setting of the area and its impact on the local inhabitants, the historical background of the people and their political implications, and the civil and social situation of the Assamese. In the final chapter, the life and culture especially of the Mishmi are described. Robinson's work provides the first details about the frontier region, though he pleads his ignorance of the tribes like the Abors, Daflas and others. Among other scholars who worked among the tribes of Assam, mention may be made of Major J. Butler who published two volumes on "Travels and Adventures in Assam". During his stay of 15 years² he also published a long paper on the 'Angami Nagas and their languages', in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal³. The two volumes written in the form of an adventurer's diary "aim at exploring a wild uncivilised foreign land", to make Assam better known, to remove some prejudices against it, and to preserve the memory of a remarkable series. The volume contains the description of the hills, specially of the Angami, Kuki, Mikis and Rangma Naga with whom he lived and developed intimate acquaintance.

Father Crick⁴ travelled on foot with his cap and flute in the valley of the Brahmaputra and part of Lohit. Unfortunately, he was killed by a Mishmi Chief, and could not write much about his experiences in the valley of the Brahmaputra. Whatever he wrote, he wrote with sympathy and insight. Summarising, for example, about the Padam he says, "They are very active, jolly and lovers of freedom and independence, generous, noble hearted, plain speakers, more honest than the average oriental and yet overmoderate in eating". A number of other scholars like Peal⁵, Hodgson⁶, Campbell⁷, S.O. Bishop⁸ and a few others wrote in a generalised manner about the Naga and other tribes of Assam. In addition to these notes by individual administrators, missionaries, and travellers, a great deal of notes were contributed to the Census Volumes of this region.

These notes, though providing the first source materials on the ethnography of Assam, suffer obviously from many shortcomings. Firstly, the ethnographic description is so generalised that it gets mixed up with the geographical description of the land, the natural setting and so on. Secondly, the specific mention of certain tribes is lacking. The statements have been made in a very simplified manner. Thirdly, the unit of the study is not designated and the description is extended to any length. Fourthly, the information is based on secondary sources, distorted, and sometimes prejudicial and contradictory. The frequent use of the terms 'uncivilised', 'wild', 'slavish' 'barbaric' and so on reflects their sense of superiority and lack of anthropological sense of cultural relativity. However, these notes and descriptive volumes provided the first set of exploratory information and prepared ground for writing exhaustive handbooks and monographs on the communities of this region. Some details of the phases of writing the handbooks and the gazetteers may be mentioned here with a view to bringing out the subsequent efforts of the administrators to study the people of this region.

REGIONAL HANDBOOKS

Under the scheme of preparing handbooks, the Government of Bengal and the Sikkim Government in collaboration with the Asiatic Society of Bengal assigned E.T. Dalton and H.H. Risley to prepare ethnological handbooks. As a result of Dalton's⁹ efforts the Descriptive Ethnography of Bengal was published in 1872 and the 'Tribes and Castes of Bengal' in two volumes were released by Risley¹⁰ in 1903. Dalton's handbook, as mentioned earlier, is based both on secondary sources and first-hand field investigation of each individual tribe.

Dalton's¹¹ work, considered from the standards set in his time is a very valuable contribution. In his days there were few anthropological principles to be followed and there was a complete absence of anthropological training. In spite of these limitations, Dalton's sympathy, his keen insight, and zealous spirit for enquiry enabled him to set an example for the ethnographic studies in India. Even today it serves as one of the best sources for supplying basic data for the study of the tribes of Assam, Bengal and Bihar.

The Tribes and Castes of Bengal, by H.H. Risley is the result of planning at Lahore in March 1885 at the Ethnographic Conference held under the aegis of the government. The Conference (held from 12 to 18 March) formulated some general lines of enquiry for the study of a comparative ethnography in different parts of India, including the Bengal Presidency. It was decided that the task of original enquiry be assigned to the district staff, which would be later supplemented with the references from books, reports and other publications. The conference prepared the objectives and the mechanism of enquiry and in these they tried to follow the methods and outlines prepared by a committee of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in 1879. For an anthropometric scheme Risley sought the guidance of P. Tapinard and also his suggestions and instructions for dealing with the subject. Instruments were also supplied by him which could be applicable in Indian conditions.

Armed with vigorous anthropological training and tools, Risley as the Census Commissioner in 1891 collected, for the first time, rich field-data on the tribes and castes of Assam, Bengal and Bihar. Risley's approach was to emphasize the tribes and castes on the same level and for the first time he provided material not only about the respective tribes but also about the theory of the origin of castes, stratification of castes in Hinduism and Islam, totemism and so on.

Risley's interest in the study of the people extended far beyond the regions covered in the two volumes and as Census Commissioner of 1891-92 census he made a comparative study of the peoples of India¹¹, in which he described the physical and social types to be found in different parts of India. This book deals with the different aspects of tribes and castes in a fairly comparative manner and attempts to present an integrated picture of the people of India. Although some of his conclusions have become doubtful and controversial in the light of recent researches in physical and social anthropology in India, it still remains a pioneering piece of comprehensive research. If he finds a critic in B.S. Guha¹² for using linguistic criteria like Aryan and Dravidian for the classification of races in India, he continues to be appreciated by S.S. Sarkar.

Besides the preparation of large-scale handbook, many minor works on the tribes of the North-Eastern Himalayas were published by a number of scholars. A very generalised and sketchy ethnographic note on the Lushais was contributed by Cole.¹³ In course of the Census Operations the customs and manners of tribes like the Akas, the Daflas, the Mishmis, the Abors and the Miris had come to light. The social divisions, forms of government, the agricultural practices, and the means of recreation of the Akas were all looked into. The Abors were described as a polyandrous and a democratic tribe. The Miris divided into classes and sects were found trading with the above and the Miris of Lakhimpur shared elements of neighbouring Hindus in their religion.¹⁴ Under the efficient and scholarly guidance of J.H. Hutton notes on the different hill tribes like the Lushais, Cacharis, Syntengs and the Hill Cacharis were prepared respectively by C.S. Muller, C.J.H. Gress, Harry Black, C.J. Hebne, Perry and Walker.¹⁵ In the true spirit of the ethnographic tradition of that time, the respective tribes as such have been described by the different scholars without any pointed reference to local or regional variations.

DISTRICT GAZETTEERS

With the success in preparing the handbooks on tribe and castes of the different provinces, the British Government thought of preparing District Gazetteers under the supervision of some of the less experienced administrators. These District Gazetteers in addition to giving other information provide a considerable material on ethnography and deserve a pointed reference in tracing the development of anthropological research in the North-Eastern Himalayas.

As early as 1886 E.W. Dun¹⁶ compiled the Gazetteer of Manipur under the royal patronage of the Manipur State. It was followed by publication of another gazetteer on North Lushai hills by A.W. David.¹⁷ The preparation of these two gazetteers was an example for B.C. Allen¹⁸ who was exclusively assigned the work of compilation of the District Gazetteers of Assam. A general pattern for compiling the information was laid down. The chapter on population in these gazetteers provides materials on the different tribes like the Nagas, the Mikirs, the Kukis, the Cacharis and so on. In general, the material was collected on the tribal modes of cultivation, village pattern, religion, material culture and such other aspects. The following gazetteers on the districts of the North-Eastern Himalayas with respective description in each, were prepared within a span of twenty-five years.

The preparation of the series of District Gazetteers, obviously reflects the efforts of the Government to produce literature for the information of the colonial administrators with the details about the smaller regions of the province. Here the unit of study has been reduced from the province to a district with a view to presenting details of the different aspects of the districts.

Volume	District	Date of publication	Tribes
I	Cachar	1905	Cachari, Kukis, Nagas, Mikirs
II	Lushai Hills	—	Koch, Rabhas, Lushais, Nokmas
III	Goalpara	1903	Rabha, Mech, Cacharis
IV	Kamrup	1903	Rabha, Koch
V	Darrang	1905	Cacharis, Rabha, Koch
VI	Nowagong	1903	Ahoms, Chutiayas, Cacharis, Mech and Miris
VII	Sibsagar	1906	Ahoms, Chutiayas, Cacharis, Mikir, Miris
VIII	Lakhimpur	1905	Ahmans, Chutiayas, Cacharis, Miris, Koch
IX	Naga Hills & Manipur	1905	Angamis, Lhota, Aos, Rengma, Kacha Naga, Kukis.
X	Khasi Jaintia Hills	—	Garos, Kharis, Mikirs
XI	Gadia, Frontier & Balipara Frontier	1928	Miris, Abors, Menyangs, Padam, Mishmis Khamptis, Nagas, Monpas, Sherdukpen, Akas, Miris, Doglas, Apatanis, Hill Miris.

The ethnographic descriptions presented in these District Gazetteers, which form just a chapter in the Gazetteer is, obviously in the form of short notes. The information given is on the pattern of Dalton's, and Risley's short descriptions and the nature of information is also the same or similar.

TRIBAL MONOGRAPHS

In the District Gazetteers of later periods one finds a brief information regarding the tribes inhabiting the respective districts. Moreover, the government needed more material on the customs and ways of life of the different tribes. In order to meet these needs it was decided to publish independent monographs on the tribes of Assam including the tribes of NEFA. In the year 1904 the Government of Assam took a decision to bring together all the scattered and fragmentary information collected by the previous investigators and supplemented them with up to date information in order to publish them in the shape of monographs. The tribal monographs were to be prepared by persons, officials or missionaries, who, for a long time, were in close touch with the respective tribes. The proposal made by Sir Bamfylde Fuller, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam in 1902, was duly approved by the government of India.

Col. P.R.T. Gurdon, a Deputy Commissioner, was appointed editor of the monograph series as well as Superintendent of Ethnography in Assam. Gurdon with his long, close, and continuous acquaintance with the tribes like the Khasis, could carry on the work successfully for several years till he was relieved by an equally competent anthropologist, J.H. Hutton.

In order to set a model before the other workers Gurdon prepared a tribal monograph on the Khasi. The book¹⁹ originally written and published in 1906 was thoroughly revised by the author in its second edition and published in 1914. This edition, unlike before was marked by certain amount of richness and authenticity. Gurdon's objective was to make the monograph on the Khasi a model for other researchers by providing all possible ethnographic details and to present a rounded picture of the Khasi culture. His data were specially enriched during the census of

1911. The physical appearance of the Khasi was compared to other tribes like that of Mundas of Chotanagpur. In the chapter on domestic life, the economic occupations, agriculture crops, hunting, fishing, foodgrowing, manufacture, pottery and weaving are described at length. The third chapter elaborates in detail the tribal organisation and the Khasi social system. The Khasis were divided into different States having autonomous organisations. The various institutions and customs such as Sardarship, marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption, land tenure and practice of human sacrifices have been described. The author while describing the life of the Khasi has made specific reference to the source materials and has given several case studies regarding their ordeals etc. Gurdon presents a detailed description and categorisation of the Khasi religion which according to him is animistic. The serpent worship, priesthood, the ceremonies held and the 'rites de passage', disposal of the dead and the practice of the megalith etc. have also been described. There is also a chapter on folklore and translations. It is the first monograph which deals with the land tenure of the tribe and the decisions in civil and criminal cases have been mentioned with reference to case studies. On the whole, the second edition of Gurdon's monograph was both rich in methodological leads as well as substantive description, obviously providing a model to the other monographers working with him.

Under the guidance and editorship of Gurdon and later of Hutton a series of sixteen monographs were written by twelve persons of which, ten were administrators, one missionary and another a medical officer. With the exception of S.N. Majumdar and another American missionary all these ethnographers are Europeans. These monographs have been prepared by them along with their administrative duties, and obviously suffer from several limitations, reference to which, has been made at appropriate places.

The next monograph under this series was published on the Naga tribes of Manipur by T.C. Hodson²⁰ in 1911. This monograph was the result of the author's collection of information made some ten years before its publication without any intention of publishing it. The monograph published under the order of the Government of Bengal and Assam is divided into five chapters dealing with social and domestic life, law and custom, religion and folktales. In the first chapter the different institutions are described with reference to the accounts presented by previous authors. In the description Hodson makes references to almost all the Naga tribes inhabiting Manipur. The book provides a description not only of individual tribes but also of the Naga tribes as a whole. Besides this monograph, Hodson²¹ had earlier revised and edited a monograph on the Methies tribe. He filled in the gaps and made up to date the accounts originally prepared by Col. Gullock and Brown and published it as a full length monograph in 1908. The book divided into four sections is devoted to ethnographic descriptions of material culture, social and political organisation and religion. The last two chapters of the book deal with folklore, folktales, and linguistic affinities with certain other sources of information.

These two monographs by Hodson, further refined the outline and methods for the description of the tribes. The modifications made in the arrangement of chapters, later proved helpful. Though both these monographs were primarily based on secondary and library work, he obviously enriched the monographs by supplementary observations based on fieldwork.

Another significant point about these two publications is that the emphasis continued to be on territorial limitations and not on the tribe as the unit of study. The Methies and the Nagas

were selected within the political boundaries of the State of Manipur. The former represented several non-tribal communities practising Hinduism and caste hierarchy. The later included the Tangkhuls, Kukis, Maos and other Naga tribes. The descriptions however, are quite extensive and may be taken as exhaustive monographs on a group of tribes and non-tribes bearing common name.

The monograph on the Garo tribe of Assam was published by A. Playfair²² in 1909. Playfair, a district commissioner of the Garo district for several years, learnt the language spoken by the Garos and conducted intensive research on both the hills and plains of Garo through their own languages. The monograph describes, on the pre-established pattern, the life and culture of the Garos and as the work is based mainly on field research the description is more detailed than the one presented by Hodson. the description of the Garo customs is more specific and at times he makes reference to the villages from where the materials have been collected. His knowledge of the Garo dialect enabled him to make a study of the Garo language and folklore in a more effective manner. He was also helped by an intelligent Garo priest in getting the materials on folklore and religious life, and may also have interviewed other Garos.

The monograph on the Cachari was written in 1911 by Rev. Sidney Endle²³ on the request of the Director of Ethnology, Government of Bengal and Assam. The work by Endle is based on his fortyone years acquaintance with the Cacharis. Endle's contact with the Cacharies was quite intimate, as in all parts of Cachar he established numerous village schools, built many church buildings and wrote a large number of books in Cachari.

Though the monograph on the Cacharis has been written within the same outline as provided by the Director of Ethnography, the main emphasis is on the folklore and linguistic studies of the Cachari. The book has further been enriched with editorial notes by P.R.T. Gurdon at appropriate places. In general, the Cacharis have been described as a semi-Hindu community and their institutions have been described on the basis of a detailed enquiry. The monograph, however fails to make any specific mention of the places or villages from where the material was collected.

Lieutenant Col. J. Shakespeare²⁴ wrote a comprehensive monograph on the inhabitants of the Lushai hills. The Lushais belonging to the Tibeto - Burman stock inhabit the interior hills beyond Chittagong (now in Bangladesh). The term is used to indicate many clans among whom the Lushais are also a specific clan. The monograph is divided into two parts, The first part deals with the Lushai clan, while the second part examines a large number of non-Lushai clans, like the Kukis, Thados, Lathas and others. Following the usual monographic style of description, the economic, social, political and religious organisations have been described in three chapters. The usual emphasis is on the folklore but elementary linguistic analysis have also been given the attention.

In Five chapters of part II is given, a brief description of the Jhum cultivators, semi-nomadic and other non-Lushai clans. In chapter I, more than a dozen other Lushai clans have been described; in the second chapter half a dozen tribes, influenced by the Lushai clans, are mentioned. In the third chapter, an ethnographic description of the old Kuki clans living in Manipur is presented. The concluding chapter includes legends, folksongs and a short note on the Lushai dialects.

Shakespeare's monograph on the Lushai and Kuki clans follows the traditional monographic model and presents a rounded description of a number of Lushai and non-Lushai clans. His approach, however, is somewhat distinct from the earlier efforts. Firstly, the book is adequately illustrated with objects of material culture, and secondly, it attempts to clarify the ethnographic status of a number of geographically scattered clans of the Kuki stock.

J.H. HUTTON

The regular flow of monographs on the tribes of the North-Eastern Himalayan region suffered a setback during the First World War. It was possible only, after the War, in 1921 for J.H. Hutton²⁵ to revive the series with the publication of his monograph on the Angami Naga. Hutton, an Anthropologist trained at Oxford, served in the Naga Hills for a long time. He learnt the dialects of some of the Naga tribes and with the help of several competent interpreters and investigators collected data for monographs on the Angamis and other Naga tribes.

Hutton has written this book on the model of the earlier monograph. However, the descriptions are more analytical, and the relevant and significant aspects of Angami culture are emphasised better. In the context of agriculture both the terrace and the Jhum cultivation have been adequately described and illustrated with examples from the two villages of Kohima and Viswama. For the first time the Angamis' terms of relationships, recorded in genealogical table have been collected and the pattern of inheritance has been described. The nature of crime and offence and the status of women are also described which incidentally were missing in the earlier monographs. Like Gurdon in his work on the Khasis, Hutton also undertakes an extensive description of the Angami religious beliefs and rituals, worship and festivals and *Gunas* (taboos) in the context of marriage and death. Magic, witchcraft and divination also find mention with possible elaboration. As regards folklore, unlike the earlier monographs, Hutton adopted the method of providing free translation into English.

A revised edition of this book,²⁶ 'The Angami Nagas', has been published recently with twenty-one pages of correction and additions by the late J.H. Hutton. The changes are not many—addition of a new preface, a few extra notes to the text, replacement of appendix IX on the orientation of the dead and the reduction of a few photographs. With these minimum changes, the book continues to give us the picture of the traditional Angami culture which is fast disappearing under the process of transformation.

In the same year Hutton²⁷ published another monograph on the Sema Nagas which was based on his eight years' experience at Mokokchung and Kohima. During this long period, Hutton learnt the Sema language and observed the Sema community and its individuals intimately. As an efficient administrator he used to settle all sorts of disputes of the Semas pertaining to the tribal customs. This further helped him in storing the information about their customs and culture. For the identification of local plants, he took the help of Botanists and for identifying unique birds he was aided by the administrator J.P. Mills. For collecting information and acting as interpreters, he had a host of Sema tribal chiefs and the Sema employees working under him.

As regards the frame for the ethnographic description, he followed monographs. In recording Sema folklore, however, he along with translations into English also recorded the original Sema text.

The materials on anthropometry, blood-groups and the Sema language have been put in a series of appendices. Taken together, these two monographs distinguished Hutton as an efficient and venturesome ethnographer, who could risk his life for the collection of facts and their verification. Though, in general, he follows the model of monographs laid down 15 years ago, he adds several new subjects like land tenure, position of women, kinship, terminology and so on. In addition to giving a picturesque description of the existing culture he also goes back in the tribal history of the Semas and the Angamis to establish the affinity of the Nagas with that of tribes inhabiting Asia and South-East Asia.

This book on the Sema Naga was also re-edited²⁸ and amended by the author himself and has again been available with the courtesy of the government of Nagaland. The revisions include the inclusion of two appendices: (1) one on the use of Sema tones, (2) additional notes in the text, (3) a new preface and (4) omission of twelve of the original photographs. Hutton, both in his new preface and appendix traces the Kuki Chin origin of the Sema. The present Sema tribe, according to him, resulted from a fusion of this invading race with the assimilated Sangtai, the former giving the Sema their constant urge for extension and migration, their political system, and belief in a single God, while the later contributed the form of ceremonial ritual, dress etc.

This new trend of publishing the old monographs which have been for long, out of print deserves special stimulation as it is likely to encourage the re-study of these tribals which are fast undergoing transformation under the impact of modern forces. The government of Nagaland as well as the Oxford University Press are to be congratulated on the production of these books.

Hutton's competence as an authority on the Naga tribe is also reflected in many papers published in a number of professional journals. In a series of notes in the Census volumes²⁹, he attempts comparisons and establishes affinities among different Nagas and other tribes in Assam. He finds that the tribes in Assam migrated from several directions, the West, Southern China from the North-East. As regards the material culture, specially the weapons and implements the striking connection with the Indonesian types has been established.

J.H. Hutton³⁰ in a paper, 'Assam and the Pacific', compared the tribal cultures of the Polynesian and Melanesian Islands with those of the tribes of Assam. The Polynesian use of stone tools has a close parallel in the Naga hills. He also refers to the striking resemblance in shell ornaments etc. Such sporadic resemblances do not take us far. Any serious attempt to connect the two groups of tribes for establishing a total resemblance of cultural sequence should be based on a large number of similarities.

J.P. MILLS

Another administrator of equal competence and scholarship, J.P. Mills published his monographs on the Lhota Nagas in the same year when the two monographs of Hutton were released. Mills under the active supervision and encouragement of Hutton worked among the Lhota, for several years and published his book in 1922. While describing the Lhota culture, Mills was struck with the process of de-tribalization of the Lhotas, firstly under the influence of Christianity introduced by the American Baptist Mission and secondly that of Hinduism from the Nepalese settlers. In one village (Leshio) he noticed the absence of communal ceremonies for the last 20 years. The traditional youth dormitory Morang, had fallen into disuse, and the young men would not take trouble to repair the same. He however, reports that in a non-Christian village Sapatsho, the villagers rebuilt these buildings of the Morang and continued to use it.

The other monograph of Mills³¹ is on the Ao, numerically the largest Naga tribe of Assam. Mills published his monograph on 'Ao' in 1926, while two other monographs on the same tribe, by W.C. Smith³² an American missionary, and Dr. S.N. Majumdar³³ of the Indian Medical Service were published in 1925. These three works on the Ao, one by the British administrator, the other by a missionary and the third by an Indian doctor bring out the differences in their respective approaches and viewpoints.

Mill's description of the Ao is based on fieldwork during his stay as a sub-divisional officer at Mokokchung for seven years from autumn of 1917 to 1924. Based on his own close observation of the Ao culture, assisted by a number of European administrators and tribal employees as well as supervised by Hutton, the editor of the monograph series, Mills wrote a competent monograph on the Ao Naga. The author has made an attempt to estimate the social impact of the American Baptist Mission on the Ao society. He does not hesitate to bring to light the errors in approach of the missionaries towards tribal problems and suggests changes in their orientation. He criticises the arbitrary prejudices of the missionaries against all traditional customs, ceremonies and dances of the Ao on the plea that they belong to the old day of heathen dominance with head-hunting. Such a short-sighted and retrograde policy strikes at the very root of the whole social structure of the people, and its effects are bound to be unhealthy.

Smith's work on the Ao has emerged out of his primary interest in the Ao languages. His awareness that language and folklore need to be understood in the context of culture, coupled with inspiration from Hutton, led him to write a monograph on the Ao. This monograph was revised by several professors of the University of Chicago and specially by Prof. Frederick Starr who made a positive suggestion for the study of the Ao Nagas in relation to the Dayaks of Borneo and to the Igorots of the Phillipines.

Smith admits that several suggestions of Hutton have been incorporated in his monograph. He also accepts the fact that while he has generally followed the traditional model of monograph writing, certain departures, however, are evident. The chapters devoted to personal appearance, domestic life, social organization, and above all the place of Ao Nagas in the human family are all examples of this departure.

Smith analyses the extent and process of acculturation among the Ao Nagas. He observes that Christianity has forced the Ao Nagas to transcend their traditional norms. It has further brought about a new realignment. Smith goes on to suggest that the administrators should follow the principles formulated by ethnologists and sociologists as they occupy a vantage position conducive to the study of primitive peoples.

The third monograph on the Ao though not of anthropological significance and running into 55 short pages deserves special mention as it was the first to be attempted by an Indian National on the Assam tribe. The material for the book was collected when Majumdar was on duty in the Naga Hills. In his fieldwork he was assisted by his Naga bearer, and his brother, who was a student of the school at Mokokchung. The author has presented a generalised account of the way of life of the Ao which would satisfy only the general reader.

The third book by Mills³⁴ is on the Rengma Nagas which was published in 1937. This monograph is significant from several points of view. Firstly, it was written when J.P. Mills was honoured with the appointment as the Honorary Director of Ethnography in Assam after J.H. Hutton. Secondly, this work also concludes the series of monographs published by the

Government of Assam. The study of the Rengmas though of great importance, could not be taken up earlier owing to certain complex geographical settings of this tribe. The tribe was geographically divided into two areas—the western and the eastern—and their habitations were located between Sema and Lhota Nagas. At the level of acculturation, again, the eastern Rengmas being isolated and cut off, have maintained their old traditional culture while the western Rengmas being greatly exposed to Christianity have undergone transformation. In this monograph the culture of the western Rengma has been described. Though written on the same old ethnographic model, it gives certain analytical data and attempts at varied comparisons. Mills finds that the Rengmas are unable to graft change. The older generation hates the changes being brought about rapidly by the American Baptist Mission. The new generation, however, has tendency, rightly or wrongly, to accept them. It is painful for those who love their culture and who refuse to see it being destroyed before their very eyes. At the end of chapter on laws and customs, he observes that the traditional system based on the principles of give and take which provided stability and happiness to family is fast disintegrating.

Mill's study of the Rengma Nagas brings to light some points of comparison between the cultures of some of the tribes living in the two separate settings. He also made a critical study of the changes brought about by the American missionaries among the Ao Nagas. Before Mills, no Ethnographer had attempted to record the reactions of the people to their acculturation. Thus, Mills, in many ways equals Hutton as a monographer. He also enjoys the privilege of being the last editor of the monograph series and, obviously, with the passage of time and and accumulation of experience, monograph-writing underwent refinement in methodology and substantive reportings.

A few other monographs though not covered under the Government of Assam Monograph Series, deserve mention here as both in form and spirit they share many things in common with the monographs mentioned earlier. Sir Edward Gait, who was instrumental in inspiring monographic researches in Bihar also wrote a general book on the History of Assam.³⁵ Based on archaeological materials, old manuscripts, travellers' accounts, religious scriptures and other secondary sources, Gait's book attempts to trace the history of Assamese culture and other tribal communities. He established the Assamese to be of mixed origin, and the numerous tribes of somewhat pure mongoloid elements. The inter-tribal relationships have been examined in terms of their physical features, religious beliefs and practices and social characteristics. The relations of the British administration with the Hill tribes has found a special mention in Chapter XVI of the book.

William Shaw wrote on Thadou Kukis. He stayed over seven years in Manipur and five years in the Naga Hill districts.³⁶ Shaw's interest in writing this book was to put in record the important peculiarities and significant customs of the Kukis of the eastern borders of Assam. He found them divided into a number of clans. Shaw, however, confines his description to the basis of a series of genealogical tables. The description of the various initiation ceremonies and the 'rites-de-passage' have been presented at the axis of the same. The monograph is enriched with a number of appendices on folktales, Thadou kinship terminology, notes on musical implements, manufacture of weapons, and at times, bring out the points of view which are different from the author's own. It has been pointed out that the picture of the Kukis was somewhat different before the Kuki rising of 1919, which was suppressed.

N.E. Perry³⁷ prepared a monograph on the Lakhers which was published in 1932. This again follows the model of the earlier monographs. An attempt has been made to take into account the

relevant material on the Lakhers by Grierson, Hutton, Gurdon, and Dun. The Lakhers represent a mixed tribal community and the distinctive features of these communities have been brought out. A revised version of the monograph was published in 1932.

THE RECENT MONOGRAPHS ON THE TRIBES OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

The British administrators wrote a series of 16 monographs on the tribes of Assam, Manipur and Nagaland between 1906 and 1937 under a well organised scheme executed by the Directorate of Ethnography. However, it still remained to begin a similar work for the tribes of Arunachal in April, 1957. With a view to providing basic information to the administrators in NEFA as well as to collecting base-line data on the different tribes, a scheme was prepared by the then NEFA Administration under the able supervision of Verrier Elwin the then Adviser to NEFA Administration for Tribal Affairs. Under this scheme one Research Officer was posted in the headquarters of each of the five divisions of NEFA to prepare monographs on the important tribes of their respective divisions.

Under this scheme the first monograph to appear was on the Daflas by B.K. Shukla³⁸ Assistant Research Officer of the Subansiri Division. The book is based on the author's field work for two years (1956-58), through the medium of the Dafla dialect, in the villages of Plain valley and the lower bank of the Khru. In the collection of field-data, he acknowledges the special help from two leading Dafla priests and the political interpreter who accompanied him in the Dafla villages.

The monograph written under the supervision of Verrier Elwin, examines the physical and historical settings in chapter one and domestic life including the details of economy, village patterns, household patterns and ornament, music and dance etc. in Chapter II. In Chapter III social life, the details of the family, the life cycle of an individual, the divisions of the tribe have been described. The next chapter is about the political life, the warfare, legal system and the customary laws of the people. The chapter on religion describes the religious beliefs of the Daflas, their pantheon and sacrifices, the diseases, the drinks, and death. The Epilogue, which is the last chapter, includes the general impression of the author regarding the tribe along with the other tribes that concerned the development of research.

In the same year, another monograph on the Tangsas of the Namchik and Tirap valley written by M.P. Dutta,³⁹ Assistant Research Officer of the Tirap Frontier Division was released by the NEFA Administration. The book based on prolonged and patient fieldwork describes the tribe on the model of the earlier monograph by Shukla. The outline as mentioned already was finalised under the guidance of Elwin for providing interesting reading to the ordinary readers, administrators, as well as to the social scientists. The complex culture of the Tangsas, comprising a number of sub-tribes inhabiting the central part of the Tirap Frontier Division along the Indo-Burmese border, has been described in an interesting and simple manner. The present work takes into consideration only the five sub-tribes of the Tangsas inhabiting the valley between the Manchik and Tiep rivers. The monograph, apart from providing description of the various institutions, also includes a discussion on the kinship terminology. In the Epilogue, Dutta examines certain problems faced by the tribe, like communications, agriculture, handicrafts, health, education and so on.

Another Research Officer, Mr. T.K.M. Barua⁴⁰ wrote a monograph on the Idu Mishmis, inhabiting the large hilly area of the Lohit Frontier Division. The author had been in contact

with the Idu Mishmis for about ten years before 1952. But from 1957 onwards he conducted organized field researches among the tribe. Based on his intensive fieldwork, Barua presented the material through a monograph on the lines prescribed by the NEFA Administration. In the Epilogue, the author enumerates the difficulties before the administration for providing facilities for the people. He makes special mention of the problems of communication and individual psychology of the people in accepting innovations.

The next monograph under this was published in 1961, on the Sherdukpens of the Kameng Division by R.R.P. Sharma,⁴¹ the Research Officer of the same Division. He collected the relevant material during his posting there for three years. Within the outline provided by the NEFA Administration, Sharma presents an illustrated account of the historical setting, domestic and social life, political organisation, religious beliefs and practices of the Sherdukpens. It has been pointed out in the Epilogue that the Sherdukpens are one of the most advanced tribes of NEFA. This book has brought to light new vistas of knowledge and understanding of an almost unknown tribe and provides a basis for future research on them.

In the same series of monographs three other books by Srivastava⁴², Sinha⁴³, and Roy⁴⁴ deserve mention here. Srivastava, a Research Officer of Siang wrote a monograph on the Gallong tribe of the villages near Along of the Siang division. The book presents an introductory idea of the Gallong's land, domestic life, social life and religious life. On the accepted general model, Srivastava presents a complete picture of the Gallong culture which is based on the author's long and continued stay as Research Officer at Along and his intimate contacts with the people. In the Epilogue he mentions that the walls of isolation were crumbling down gradually and the horizons of progress are expanding. The inter-village and the inter-tribal feuds are being replaced by inter-villages and inter-tribal trade. Again, with the acceptance of education for children, permanent cultivation, co-operative movements and innovation in health and agriculture, the culture canvas of the Gallongs is fast changing.

Similar description is given by Sinha in his monograph on the Akas of the Kameng Division. Roy's description of Padam Minyong of the Siang Division tribes runs into three hundred and twenty pages. It provides information on the colourful and fascinating culture of the Padam Minyong. It is more than a mere descriptive monograph and will be discussed in another context along with other analytical works on this region.

Elwin's⁴⁵ 'A Philosophy of NEFA', though written under the series of NEFA Administration is an analytical work on applied anthropology and is much more than a mere statement of facts about the tribes. In view of this we will discuss this work also in another context in the following pages.

TWO PHASES OF MONOGRAPHIC STUDIES

To conclude, the ethnography of the North-Eastern Himalayas had two different periods for monographic studies. The first period marked the publication of 16 monographs between 1906 and 1937 under the auspices of the monograph series of Assam. The series initiated the study of individual tribes of a section or a group of tribes by scholarly-oriented administrators well-acquainted with the respective tribal languages and tribal culture. The material was presented more or less within the prescribed frame formulated with the help of new British anthropologists, and specially to suit the purpose and requirements of colonial administration.

The second period began in 1957 and marked the beginning of the publication of a new series of monographs under the NEFA Administration on the tribes of NEFA. The purpose of initiating the monographic study of the NEFA tribes is similar to that of the earlier period to provide handbooks to the administrators and base-line data to anthropologists. Verrier Elwin played the same role in organising the study of the tribes as that of Sir Bamfylde Fuller in the context of ethnographic works on the tribes of Assam. In the capacity of the Adviser to the government of Assam on Tribal Affairs, Elwin prepared a plan for the study of the NEFA tribes, chalked out the outline, and initiated the research officers posted in the different divisions to write atleast one monograph on each of the tribes of the Division. Elwin supervised their field-work and edited their monographs for publication. The title NEFA monograph series had the advantage of a late beginning which enabled the administration to employ trained anthropologists to undertake this assignment.

The professionally trained anthropologists undertook field researches in the geographically most handicapped areas, learnt the languages of the respective peoples, lived in the tribal houses and applied field techniques for the collection of accurate data. These anthropologists, though employed by the NEFA Administration and working under strict official guidance, were largely oriented to scientific and objective research. The old monographers were primarily administrators and worked as amateur scholars. They wrote the monographs to strengthen colonial administration. In case of the anthropologists employed by the NEFA Administration they seemed to have worked with the motive of developing Applied Anthropology. However, on account of limited time, and other limitations, they have failed to produce really comprehensive and analytical monographs on the tribes assigned to them.

Taken together, the publication of the monographs, both the periods and types undertaken by the respective administrations, provided basic ethnography of the two regions and prepared a strong ground for undertaking advanced researches in the North-Eastern Himalayan Anthropology.

WORKS OF OTHER DISTINGUISHED ANTHROPOLOGISTS

The first anthropologist of considerable reputation and experience who initiated anthropological research in this area was no less a person than C. Von Furer-Haimendorf. Haimendorf trained in both Austrian and British Anthropology was invited by the then Governor of Assam to explore the tribal belts of Nagaland and the Subansiri Frontier Division of NEFA. In his capacity as Special Officer he came to this area in 1937 and continued ethnographic researches for more than two decades. Haimendorf wrote his first publication on the Konyak Nagas which were left untouched by earlier ethnographers. The book, 'The Naked Naga',⁴⁶ as the author himself attests, is a personal treatise. The author proceeds from one place to another, observes the social and cultural life of the primitive Nagas, and makes mention of them in the form of a traveller's description. As one advances through the pages, one identifies oneself with the author's description. He was greatly influenced by the archaic features of the unexplored facts and the typical traits of the tribe. Haimendorf, though an anthropologist, does not care to describe the different social systems with refinement. Instead, he prefers recording his own impressions regarding the economic, religious, political and social customs, and behaviour. Though it may be a disappointment for theoretically-oriented and methodologically sophisticated anthropologists, it does fill in the gap in the ethnography of Nagaland in the absence of any monograph on the Konyak Nagas.

The researches of Haimendorf among the Nagas need not be judged only in terms of his monograph mentioned above. A number of papers⁴⁷ on sacred founders among the Eastern Angami Nagas, on the Morung system of the Konyak Nagas, the megalithic culture of Assam, on religion and ethic among the Konyak Nagas and other Indian tribes and on the role of songs in Konyak culture have established his serious interest and intensive field researches among the Konyak as a supplement to the Naked Nagas.

During the years 1944-45 Haimendorf was invited to conduct an expedition in the exploratory areas of NEFA. In the course of the expedition he made contacts specially with the three NEFA tribes—the Daflas, the Miris and the Apa Tanis. In two of his publications⁴⁸, the Tour Diaries of the Special officer: Subansiri Area 1945 and the Himalayan Barbary, were published as a result of this expedition. Here the author does not take the ethnographic norms very seriously. The description in the first book is obviously in shape of tour diaries giving the romantic and risky experiences with the offensive tribes. In the second the ethnographic information regarding the Daflas, the Apa Tanis and the Miris is given in the form of a traveller's report.

Haimendorf made another visit to the Subansiri Frontier Division of NEFA in the months of March and April, 1957. This time he concentrated his fieldwork on the seven villages of Apa Tani. As a result of this supplementary fieldwork he published the book 'The Apa Tanis and their Neighbours', in 1962.⁴⁹

In this book of one hundred sixty one pages divided into eight chapters, the author begins with the description of the natural resources and makes a close study of the Apa Tani economy. The Apa Tanis who are migrants in this valley have fully adjusted with the ecological and social settings of the areas. The Apa Tanis are industrious and mild, as compared with their rash neighbours, specially the Daflas and the Miris. The chapters on social structure, position of slaves, family life, the maintenance of law, the relations with neighbours in peace and war, religious and moral order, reflect the wide coverage attempted in this fascinating monograph. In describing these aspects of the Apa Tani culture the author has always kept close to the large context of their neighbours. The Epilogue presents the changes that are occurring in the life style of the Apa Tanis specially since the first visit of Haimendorf in 1937. The tribals of the valley continue to have a surplus of rice which fetches cash from the neighbouring Daflas. Their talent for the trade has been further sharpened, and has enabled them to use closer contact with the plains dwellers and some of them have opened shops and tea stalls in the divisional headquarters. The Apa Tani women continue to remain engaged at their looms as this has proved profitable. The Apa Tanis unlike their neighbours, the Daflas and the Miris hardly approach the administration to request for interfering in their quarrels. The Apa Tanis do not fear any attack from outside. Thus, Haimendorf has described the Apa Tanis in relation to their neighbours and has brought out that the Apa Tanis are on the path to progress leading them to a rapid change. Though the tribe seems to be conservative and slow in change, the direction of change is all for the better.

Another scholar G.B.U. Bower⁵⁰ went on a pleasure trip to the Jemi Nagas. She employed an interpreter, and collected some ethnographic materials on the Jemi Nagas. Her photographs, published in her book, 'Naga Path', depicting the various aspects of the land and people of the area have attracted the attention of many.

Bower⁵¹ made another trip to the Subansiri area of NEFA. Accompanied with her husband who served as political officer of the Subansiri Division, she undertook extensive ethnographic work and collected enough material to publish her second book, 'The Hidden Land', in 1953. The book follows the same style of narrating the ethnographic material, dangerous moments, and tribal individuals in the style of a traveller's reportage.

VERRIER ELWIN

The third scholar of international repute in Social Anthropology to work in this area was Verrier Elwin. The interest of Elwin shifted from Madhya Pradesh and Orissa to the North-Eastern Himalayas with his appointment in the NEFA Administration by the end of 1953. It took him quite sometime to settle in Shillong, appoint the staff and exploring the new areas in order to begin the anthropological work in right earnest.

Elwin researches in the North-Eastern Himalayas may be examined under two heads. First, a number of monographs, mention of which has been made earlier, written under his guidance. The second set of publications is based on his own fieldwork and deserves special mention. In the course of his applied fieldwork suited for the administration, Elwin continued to collect folk-tales during his tours. Many of these folk-tales were strikingly original, and a collection of four hundred folk-tales was published in 'The Myths of North-East Frontier of India'.⁵² His next significant book, 'India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century'⁵³, was based on extensive library work on the old literature about NEFA. A large number of extracts from the writings of old explorers, missionaries and administrators, which were written between 1800 and 1900 and which were buried in the library, were collected by Elwin and brought to light in a book of five hundred pages. Though the extracts are of differing qualities and interests, they have bearing on the history and problems of the people of the area now known as NEFA. The picture emerging out of these extracts, in general, gives no label to the tribals to be low, uncivilised and barbaric.

The most widely read and appreciated book by Elwin⁵⁴ is 'A Philosophy for NEFA'. This book summarises the materials on the life and culture of the NEFA tribes and makes a case for the people of NEFA to develop along the lines of their own choice and knowledge. The five-fold principles for the development of the tribals, which were also supported by the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, in his foreword to this book, had become well-known.

'The Nagaland'⁵⁵ by Elwin is another handbook for the administrators and scholars interested in Nagaland. The book deals with the inhabitants of all the three districts of Nagaland. While in the first two chapters a general ethnographic and historical perspective of Nagaland has been presented, in the remaining chapters the recent problems of adjustment between the newly created state and the union government, the armed rebellion, the Naga temperament, the development schemes, and the probable anthropological suggestions have been carefully described and analysed. His book⁵⁶ 'Democracy of NEFA', published posthumously in 1965 examines the working of the customary provisions for the tribals of Arunachal. In a very optimistic and a scholarly manner, he examined tribal democracy of Arunachal Pradesh as in the past and present.

Elwin's⁵⁷ book 'The Nagas In The 19th Century' also appeared as his posthumous publication. This book includes a collection of general geographic, and historical accounts on the Nagas. It also devotes a few chapters to describe each of the major Naga tribes. The

concluding chapters give descriptive account of the cultural aspects of the Nagas such as, religious customs, burial practices, and economic activities. This volume would have been of greater value had it included some of the unpublished reports, letters and tour diaries available in the government archives. The book, in spite of this limitation, continues to be the most exhaustive single source of historical material on the Naga tribes and is of great significance in understanding the social change among the Nagas.

Thus in a short span of time Verrier Elwin organised anthropological researches in the North-Eastern Himalayas on a sounder footing. With the available resources he trained a team of anthropologists to take up ethnographic researches in the little-known and unexplored areas of Arunachal, and in course of about ten years he brought the colourful NEFA culture to light. Whether his Philosophy for NEFA has failed or has brought hazards for the country, the fact remains that we could know about the life and culture of NEFA only because of Elwin's efforts and researches.

Among the other significant publications of a somewhat analytical and sophisticated nature, the work of Sachin Roy⁵⁸ on Padam-Minyongs deserve special mention. The other full-length work of an analytical nature was published by Burling⁵⁹ on a Garo village. These two publications, one on a NEFA tribe, and the other on an Assam tribe, brought a turning point in the Anthropology of the North-Eastern Himalayas. With these two works, Anthropology in North-Eastern Himalayas seems to have entered an analytical stage. Roy, trained under K.P. Chattopadhyay at Calcutta University, made his first acquaintance with the Adis of the Siang Division in the year 1948. When he joined the NEFA administration as a Cultural Research Officer in 1956, he followed up his earlier fieldwork among the Padams and Miniyongs, the sub-divisions of the Adi tribe inhabiting the Central part of the Siang Frontier Division. In the course of his fieldwork he was assisted by four political interpreters, and after a two-year fieldwork, he was in a position to write the book on the Padams and Miniyongs.

The book in general has been written more or less in the same frame as other monographs on the NEFA tribes. However, it makes a departure by giving an exhaustive detail on the various aspects of economic, social, and religious life of the Padams and Miniyongs. Also, the author examines the culture of the two sub-tribes in the context of the Adi culture, in general, and the northern Tibetan culture, in particular. While the culture of the Padam and the Miniyong is obviously distinct from the Tibetan culture in the north, he also brings out in the traditional context many striking differences within the Padams and Miniyongs themselves. He makes special efforts to highlight the new focus in Adi culture, that is reflected in the solidarity movement among the Adi groups of tribes. The policy of the government of India after Independence to bring the Adi closer to the rest of the Indian mainstream, has found favourable response. This sort of acculturation led to a tendency among the Adis of blind imitation. This sort of acculturation by blindly imitating external models has been checked by the policy of planning change on a middle course between complete assimilation and isolation which has been in operation for the last one decade. Roy, in the course of his discussion of the material cultures, social organisation and the tribal ethos on the one hand, has suggested solutions to various problems. Thus the book rich in the analysis of the cultural situations in NEFA suggests steps for a full integration of the Adis with the peoples of the plains without loss of their fine qualities.

After Roy's work an American scholar Burling⁶⁰ with his interest in kinship and social structure, made an intensive study of a Garo village. As a result of his fieldwork for two years

(October 1954-56) in the capacity of a research scholar from Harvard University Burling submitted his dissertation on the Garos. In this work, he was accompanied by his wife and he got the active co-operation of the American Baptist Foreign Missions and the local administration in conducting the field research. Though the author's main interest was the study of kinship and social structure he has also devoted chapters to religion, political organisation, economy and such other aspects. In the last chapter "New ideas", the author examines the introduction of (1) external political control, (2) new agricultural methods and (3) Christianity as the instrument of transformation and disintegration in the Garo style of life. The author has obviously failed to analyse the extent of Garo contacts with the rest of India. But, he has succeeded in establishing the increase in the vision of the Garos from the village to the entire Garo district. He also notes that though a few Garos have been educated in the universities of Gauhati and Calcutta, almost all of them think of themselves as Garos only.

During the last two decades some scholars and researchers from Calcutta University have done some field researches in the North-East Himalayan regions and some of their publications in the field of kinship system, religious beliefs and practices and material culture deserve mention here.

K.P. Chattopadhyaya⁶¹ who was trained in classical British Anthropology by W.H.R. Rivers took up the study of the Khasi kinship and social organisation. He is one of the first persons to apply River's genealogical method to the study of kinship system and social organisation in India. His publication is on the pattern of kinship and social organisation of the Khasi in the form of anthropological paper No. 6 of the University of Calcutta. His next paper related to it on Khasi land-ownership was published in Eastern Anthropologist in 1949.⁶²

T.C. Das⁶³ also paid several visits to the tribes of the North-Eastern Himalayas and made a special study of the Purums, an old Kuki tribe of Manipur. His full-length monograph on the Purums followed by his two papers on the relics of matrilocal residence among the old Kuki tribe of Manipur, and on the social organisation of the Purum still remains the pioneering work on the North-East Indian tribe.

The Purums numbering only 303 (1931) and living in four villages Khulan, Tampak, Changninglong and Chumbang of the Manipur hills have been the subject matter of a meticulous inquiry by Das. During 1931 to 1936 Das with his students visited these villages on four different occasions and stayed there for about five months. In the course of his enquiry Das had mainly to depend on middle-aged informants and worked with the help of three interpreters. He collected data on the different aspects of the Purum society by applying traditional anthropological techniques. The data on material culture were collected monthly by personal observation. The materials for study of social organisation including kinship system, laws of succession, descent and inheritance were collected according to the genealogical method of W.H.R. Rivers. The information on the life-cycle of the individual as well as on the religious system was checked right through by the interview method. The data about music and dancing were collected by participant observation.

The data collected in 1936 could not be published earlier than 1945 owing to scarcity of printing paper during the Second World War. The war, which was also fought near 'Palal' of the Purum area, might have affected the Purum culture. Das, however, expresses his inability to study the impact of the war on the Purum which might have undergone transformation, owing to severe fighting between the Allies and the Japanese on several occasions.

The rich materials collected from the villages of the Purums have been presented in ten chapters: (1) the Purums and their habitat, (2) Economic life, (3) Social organization, (4) Political organisation, (5) Religion, (6) Festivals, (7) Life-cycle of an individual, (8) Scientific knowledge of the Purum, (9) Music and Dance and (10) Conclusion. While describing the Purums and their habitat, Das presents the geographical location of the Purum villages. He brings out the place of the Purums among the Kuki tribes in Assam and Bengal and records the physical characteristics of the Purums on the basis of anthropometric measurements and observations made by him in 1936. Das's work is an integrated and complete anthropological inquiry of the Purums covering the physical, linguistic, demographic and ethnographic aspects.

While describing their economic life Das gives facts about the villages, the house pattern, the domestic animals, details of food habits, dress, their drinks, crops, household belongings, daily routine, and their hospitality.

While describing the social and political organisation, religious festivals, and life-cycle, Das records every detail about the traditions and anticipates many conceptual problems that still remain to be dealt with and apprehended by modern Indian ethnographers. Das observes, "in order to understand the present condition of the culture of the Purums a knowledge of those people who surround them is necessary". He points out that besides the Manipuris the Purums had been in contact with a number of Naga tribes. In matters of dress and decoration the Purums seemed to have borrowed freely from the Manipuris. In matters of hair-dressing, wearing of ornaments, and domestic architecture also the Purums have been influenced by the Manipuris of the valley.

In the domain of social organisation or rather the internal structure of the tribe in particular there seems to have been little or no borrowing though there are sufficient similarities with the Meitheis. this similarity according to Das, is due to their participation in a common cultural pattern. In the domain of religion however, the Purums have borrowed mostly from their neighbours, the Meitheis. Das identifies three elements in the composition of the Purum religion, viz. (1) ancient traits of their own culture, (2) direct loans from the Meitheis and (3) Hindu elements borrowed through the Manipuris.

In the light of the ethnographic analysis about the Purum culture, in the spirit of a functional anthropologist, Das puts forward practical suggestions for the betterment of the Purums. At this point he refers to the views of Verrier Elwin regarding the National Park and that of Aiyappan on the colonization of the Nayadis. In the light of the extensive cultural contact situation, he brings out the practical difficulty towards the realization o the concept of the 'National Park'. He also criticizes the free distribution of food, clothing, shelter and free education, "as they cannot go on forever nor can they be provided for all the Nayadis and other similar communities of India." These attempts have not transformed the Nayadis into good labourers either in the fields or in the factories and they continue mostly with their old habit of begging." He is opposed to the schemes of a philanthropic nature unless it aims to increase the initiative of the individuals.

Das's following observations specially deserves very careful consideration as it stands vindicated today:

Civilization to the savage is something like an intoxicating stimulus which is conducive to health when properly administered but causes disease or death when the control is removed. This is not all; we may keep away the ordinary vagabond or

unscrupulous exploiter from the 'National Park' but what about the foreign capitalist who established his cash-crop garden, or digs deep into the heart of Mother Earth for her hidden treasure or sets up huge factories where man is turned into machine? The 'National Park' is not immune from his attack. The author does not suggest any means to keep him out of it. The capitalist is more dangerous than the rest. Under the circumstances setting up of 'National Park' will not save the primitive people from their inevitable fate. Prevention is of course better than cure but when it is not possible to prevent we should better try to cure.⁶⁴

In the light of these views, Das suggests measures for the improvement of the Purums, specially in relation to their health, sanitation, material comforts and education. He makes a plea that education must be village-centered and the role of teachers of these village schools be pivotal in the whole scheme of development. He envisages that the teachers should be the community leaders and they should initiate and guide reforms in almost every sphere of life. For this teachers would certainly require a special type of training, which can be provided in institutions particularly organised for this purpose.

On the whole, the field enquiry conducted by Das early as in the beginning of the thirties, and the publications based on it, set an example of a systematic presentation of ethnographic data. In spite of his training in so-called classical anthropology Das has shown the exceptional skill of an ethnographer who could observe, record and analyse every affair of a community. His analysis of the data in the light of both theories of culture, diffusion and functions have resulted in a balanced study of the Purum society. This work also reflects a departure from the classical monographic studies as it considers individual Purums and not the tribe as the unit of study. The material presented here is precise, concrete, verifiable and close to the context. Das deserves all our appreciation for the scholarship and anthropological excellence reflected in his work done in the days when constructive anthropology was still in its infancy. His monograph, though not well known to Indian scholars, remains a piece of meticulous fieldwork and penetrative analysis. It will continue to serve as a model for ethnographic research in anthropology.

R.C. Roy,⁶⁵ who visited the Chawte Kuki clan at a village on the banks of the Loktak in Manipur as a post-graduate student of the University of Calcutta in October 1931, wrote a paper on the clan organisation and kinship system. He found the village divided on kinship considerations. It was difficult, as accepted by the author, to get authentic data owing to the language problem.

S.C. Roy⁶⁶ studied Khasi kinship terms as early as 1927. He published a paper on them using the material collected during his visit to the Khasi area as an honorary member of the staff of Calcutta University. It seems that he was one of the earliest Indian anthropologists to visit the Khasi area even for a short while for anthropological researches and for initiating the other anthropologists in the study of matriarchic kinship system.

The interests of the Anthropological Survey of India in the study of the tribes in the north-east region find reflected in the establishment of its station in Shillong as early as 1953 and in the organisation of several visits of anthropological teams to the Gallong, Abor, Nocte tribe of Tirap in NEFA, Garo, Khasi, Lushai, Penar, Mizo in Assam, Tripura and Manipur. The anthropologists from the Anthropological Survey of India have done field researches in North East India on the physical, linguistic, prehistoric and social aspects of the tribes of NEFA, Assam, Tripura and Manipur. Of the various bulletins of the Anthropological Survey of India thirty-five papers have been published by the anthropologists of the Survey.

B.B. Guha⁶⁷ the then Director of the Department of Anthropology himself studied, the Moshuk organisation among the Abors. He found the Moshuk to be a training centre for the tribal youth.

Work by Anthropological Survey of India

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

S.W. Aalok is the first qualified Naga with a degree in anthropology from the University of Calcutta. He conducted field researches as a member of the team of anthropologists of the Department of Anthropology, Government of India, which visited the Nocte Naga in the Tirap division in 1954. Aalok⁶⁸ in a paper describes the various details of the Morung organisation. The site selection, the construction of the Morung, its membership, functions, daily routine etc. have been dealt with alongwith half a dozen folk-songs illustrating the daily routine of the Naga youth.

B. Mukherjee⁶⁹ visited the Garo hills in November-December 1953 and worked among the Metabung and Abeng sections of the Garos inhabiting six villages. In one paper he brings out the role of the Morung in exercising social control in a Garo village. In another paper, based on genealogies of forty two Garo families, he writes about their family structure. His investigations bring to light the sex-ratio (86 males and 104 females) the marital status of the male and female (46 and 62 per cent respectively) and the average family size (five persons) of the Garos. He also studied the social organisation of the Khasis. The clan and sub-clan system and the family organisation of the Khasis were discussed in another paper published in 'Man In India'. The material for these papers was collected from four villages south of Chera State in the year 1954. Mukherjee also wrote a paper on the Khasi kinship system in 1958 in which he pointed out that the social groupings of three arrows by a father to his son at his marriage ceremony symbolises a threefold relationship. Thus, Mukherjee in these and other writings has devotedly worked on the kinship or social organisation of many of the tribes of the north-eastern Himalayan region.

In another paper on cousin-marriage among the Riangs, Mukherjee⁷⁰ describes the principles of marriage of the Riangs, a tribe of Tripura which numbered 38,556 in 1951. A section (2.2 per cent) of the tribe was studied in the east Bogapa area of Belonias division where one hundred thirty two Riang families lived in a few scattered hamlets. He analyses the kinship terms and marriage relationships to prove that the Riangs had family endogamy and marriage between the children of two male siblings and it was the original practice based on their particular notions of kinship. The author makes a statistical analysis to show that frequency of parallel cousin marriage is declining partially because of (a) breakdown of joint household, (b) the intensity of the feelings of Sandal bonds, and (c) finally, economic factors.

Mukherjee⁷¹ also studied the Riang tribe of Tripura. He wrote about the Riang economy, about their death rites, as well as about the changes that have occurred among the Riang since Indian Independence. The Riangs of Tripura were also studied by Professor K.P. Chattopadhyaya of the University of Calcutta. This led him to undertake the study of kinship and social structure of the isolated tribes in the hilly north-eastern region.

A.K. Mitra⁷² and Dibyendu Chaudhury⁷³ studied this tribe from the physical and anthropological points of view. The study of personality structure of the Riangs under the

influence of culture contact was investigated by the psychologist of the Anthropological Survey of India, P.C. Ray⁷⁴.

The social anthropological researches in this region were carried further by B C Gohain⁷⁵ who made a special study of agricultural organisation among the Abors, by B.B. Goswami⁷⁶ who made the study of the kinship system of the Lushais, by Joya Dutta Gupta⁷⁷, who studied *Ponuag*, a girls' association of the Padam Abors, and by Sukumar Banerjee,⁷⁸ who made a special study of Phar kinship and their residence pattern. The study of cultural dynamics however is limited and one comes across only one paper by M.K. Nag⁷⁹ on the effect of Christianity on a few aspects of Khasi culture in Assam.

The Anthropological Survey also followed another line of investigation among the North-Eastern tribes. A special and pioneering investigation on the living conditions, dietary habits and nutritional status was undertaken by P.N. Sengupta.⁸⁰ He made valuable researches in this little explored field of anthropology among the tribes of Abor hills specially, the Nocte tribe of Tirap in Arunachal and among the Ranghal and Riang tribes of Tripura.

Another scholar from Calcutta K.B. Pakrashi⁸¹ investigated the names and nature of the Kurus and sub-Kurus of the Mikirs. In the month of December, 1952 the author conducted enquiry in the two villages, Dafla and Sarialiju in the district of north Cachar. The data collected by him were later verified as he published a couple of articles on the social and physical aspects of the Mikirs.

The first Department of Anthropology was started at Gauhati University in the year 1952 and the next one at Dibrugarh University in 1967. This reflects the recognition of the discipline at the University level. The Department of Anthropology at Gauhati University has mainly concentrated on ethnographic studies. M.C. Goswami⁸² in collaboration with his research scholar D.N. Majumdar has published a long paper on the Garo kinship and social organisation. Their paper is of special significance as it presents an up-to-date picture of the social systems of the Garos. Goswami and his colleagues have in a few other papers mainly shown their interest in the study of social organisation of the Assam tribes. Recently, Goswami has been engaged in the study of the patterns of tribal non-tribal interactions.

Among foreign scholars, Gemini Paul⁸³ wrote a series of four articles on aspects of social organisation among the Sherdukpens, a small tribe of 1,200 souls inhabiting the village in the Rupa valley. He finds the vestiges of dormitories among the tribes and establishes on the basis of tradition and myth that the tribe has come from Tibet. In another paper 'On the place of Khadhua, the youngest sister in Khasi and Synteng society', he examines the hereditary rites of the Khasi society. He cites case studies to show that the rights of the younger sister are forfeited for her failure to fulfil the obligation of the Khasi Institution of Khadhua.

STUDY OF RELIGION

Next of kinship and social organizations; recent scholars have been interested in the study of the religious beliefs and practices of the tribes of the North - Eastern region. Apart from the earlier writings of Mills and Hutton, mention may be made of the researches by J.K. Bose⁸⁴ who wrote a series of papers specially on the Garo tribe. Bose, who has been a research fellow of the American Museum of Natural history, was associated also with the University of Calcutta. Bose started his early writings on the social organisation and published a few papers on the Garo law of

inheritance, the social organisation of Aimol Kuki, the Dual organisation in Assam, but later on he also started writing about the religion of the Kukis, the religious ceremonies of the Garos, the Dangla festivals of the Garos (1938). Though these papers are not very significant in terms of field research and techniques, they do provide some interesting materials regarding the gods and goddesses of the Garos, and the ceremonies performed in relation to them.

S.C. Mitra⁸⁵ in a note contributed to the Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay, examines the snake-worship among the Khasi and refers to a custom of offering human sacrifice to a snake deity. He establishes that this practice of snake-worship has been prevalent among the Khasis from the Stone Age. He also collected examples of human sacrifice in the name of the snake in village Surik near Shillong in 1929.

In a paper on the Double Sex Character of the Khasi Great Deity which is based on his fieldwork among the Khasis in 1949-50, U.R. Ehrenfels,⁸⁶ presents some interesting material. He examines the question as to whether the Khasi goddess is essentially a mother or whether the ancestral family and a clan mother can be considered as a goddess. The Great Goddess concept of the Khasi fused with the Greater God idea into indivisible, yet a sexually differentiated unit. He compares it with the Shiva-Shakti concept, which he considers the characteristics of the Khasi concept. Ehrenfels also contributed a paper on the nature of matriliney and social structure among the Khasis, the Garos and the Jaintias.⁸⁷

STUDY OF MATERIAL CULTURE

Along with the matrilineal social system and animistic beliefs, the North-Eastern Himalayas present very attractive varieties of material culture, such as spinning, weaving, iron smithy, pottery, basketry, cane and wood work which have been known to most of the tribes for quite a long time. The Buddhist tribes of NEFA prepared ritualistic copper and brass wares, wooden toys, arrows and spears of distinct types.

In view of the colourful material and distinct material culture a number of scholars and museologists have been attracted to this area and have written about the different arts and crafts prevalent among them.

Among the recent researchers Nilima Roy⁸⁸ made a study of basketry and domestic utensils of the Adis. She describes the various types of baskets in terms of their manufacture and use.

Sachin Roy⁸⁹ who also worked simultaneously but for a longer period has dealt with the different systems of strategy, poisonous arrows, stone-missiles etc. of the Abors. Their defensive weapons include shields, helmets, war-coats and among the weapons of offence are spears, bows, arrows, small knives and so on. Most of the weapons are locally manufactured and some of them are purchased from Pasighat of Tibet. In another series of articles Roy⁹⁰ tries to describe the dresses, the ornaments, hunting and fishing implements and decoration etc. of the Adis.

The most significant contribution to the study of material culture of the tribes of the North-Eastern Himalayas is to be found in Elwin's publication,⁹¹ 'The Art of North-East Frontier of India'. The author describes the primitive art with humility, to inspire and guide and to create cultural self-respect and to strengthen the ability to choose the best from among the tribes. With this idea in mind, the author has mainly concentrated on fabrics, wood carvings and cane-work. Incidentally, the art of tattooing, basketry, mat-making and other products of cane and bamboo have been touched, without any significant details.

The book in six chapters is profusely illustrated. It brings to light the fact that the people of the region have an excellent taste in colour and remarkable skill in devising patterns. The wood-carving is suggestive of vitality and strength. The cane-work as described by Elwin shows a high standard of technical perfection among the NEFA tribes. Thus one gets a rounded picture of the rich traditions of art forms in the Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap Divisions of the North-Eastern Frontier Agency.

In addition to bringing to light the rich heritage of the tribal art, the author describes it in context with the religious beliefs and customs. In the last chapter, Elwin analyses the nature of change that has resulted to the deterioration of primitive art owing to its competition with bazar goods, the disappearance of age-old motifs, the non-availability of either raw materials or customers, and then the general impact of Christianity and urbanization. He also makes a strong case to preserve, and to encourage primitive art and craft so that they continue to maintain the richness of their traditions of the same.

SOME RECENT RESEARCHES AND PUBLICATIONS

Some of the researchers in recent times have adopted more sophisticated methods in conducting fieldwork and in analysing the data. In a paper on the Dafla and the Miji Society, Mahapatra,⁹² presents an ecological analysis of the development of political organisation, formal mechanism of social control, and social stratification. The paper is based on a field research of a little more than a month in 1956 by the author. He worked in a little explored area of the Kameng Frontier Division and studied the Miji and that section of the Dafla which have not received attention by other anthropologists. The author on the basis of ethnographic evidences has tried to establish that these two tribes share the same social structure in their phase of traditional migration and expansion from the east. Both of them count descent and inherit patrilineally, live in long houses with extended families, and have exogamous lineages and clans, and phratries with social cohesion decreasing as the kin groups expand. None of them have hereditary chiefs or officials. Women and slaves are politically underprivileged among them. Similarly, in many ways there is basic agreement between the values of the two: raiding and war, exercise of physical powers, accumulating wealth in the form of Mithun and Tibetan brass utensils etc.; amassing more wives and begetting more children, owning slaves or bondmen etc.

The economy of both the Miji and Dafla centres round shifting cultivation, and bartering produce in trade for securing iron, salt, valuable goods and varieties of clothes from Assam. The limitations of the habitat and technology have forced the Daflas and even more so the Mijis to depend partly on trading and bartering. They are hostile competitors for living space; nevertheless, they had sworn ritual friends on the other side for promoting trade and barter. Both the Daflas and the Mijis recruited slaves from other ethnic groups but they also included a sizeable number from amongst their own. The children of the slaves merge with the clan of the master but never enjoyed the same political and social status as the children of the latter.

Another anthropologist who has been writing profusely on the problems of the hill tribes of North-East India is Dr. B.K. Roy Burman.⁹³ With full facts at his command, in the capacity of the Deputy Registrar General, he has tried to present a factual as well as interpretative appraisal of the tribal situation in the hills of North-East India. He makes a plea for an integrated area approach and examines the social situations in terms of five perspectives: (1) geo-political, (2) socio-cultural, (3) political and administrative, (4) economic and (5) systematic observation and

analysis of multifarious local problems which he adds in the revised version of his original paper. In course of the factual presentation of the socio-cultural perspective, he presents the typology of the tribes of the North-East region in terms of race, origin, language, material culture, political organisation, pattern of internal integration, age-group organization, leadership, modern type of association, students unrest, educational imbalance, religions, inter-ethnic relations, and minority group complex. Then, he goes on to discuss the political and administrative perspectives and also examines the typology of the political process beginning with the base of tribalism and ending with the phase of cosmopolitan humanism. He refers to the release of forces like sub-nationalism, proto-nationalism, infra-nationalism and presents an integrated plan for the purpose of meeting the challenge of tribal sub-nationalism.

Discussing the economic perspective, he examines the Assam land revenue regulations, the forest laws, the potentialities for the development of cottage industries, and suggests that the tribal people should be given adequate chance to develop as entrepreneurs and contractors. He also suggests that more emphasis should be given to removing exploitation from outside and for nourishing local enterprises. In Manipur, out of 20 contractors he found only four from amongst the local people. In NEFA and Nagaland though preference is given to local people in trade and commerce, he remarks that frequently outsiders control the same under cover.

Roy Burman makes some suggestions regarding other local problems such as: (1) problems posed by the Nepali immigrants in all the hill areas of North-East India, (2) problems of codification of customary laws, (3) problems of religious freedom, (4) the regrouping of villages in the Mizo hills, (5) need for a centre of higher education and research, (6) shifting of the headquarters of NEFA from Shillong to a centre either in Subansiri or in Siang, (7) demand for statehood in Manipur.

In the light of these discussions Roy Burman goes on to conclude that it is obvious that a mere plan of economic development would be utterly inadequate. He suggests that "along with economic planning, there should be social and political planning in an integrated manner." At the national level, he regrets, there is no single agency which is looking into this matter. The different aspects are being dealt with by the different Ministries. As a result some of the more vital aspects, for instance land policy, forest policy etc. are not adequately looked after. He concludes that the 'primitive complex' of the tribal communities of the region is rapidly giving place to the 'minority complex' "While at the beginning of 1950, a welfare approach was the appropriate one, now welfare approach should only play a subsidiary role to integrated political, economic and social approach."

In another paper B.K. Roy Burman⁹⁴ examines the modernisation processes in the hills of North-East India under two rubrics-exogenous and endogenous. The exogenous aspect of modernisation relates to advanced technology and complex political and social organization introduced in an area or among a group of people. The endogenous aspect of modernisation relates to two distinct phenomena. Firstly it would cover the coercive growth of a culture through the continuous interaction of its traits and its ecology and secondly, it would cover the process set in motion in response to the challenge posed by the exogenous aspect of modernisation.

Roy Burman examines the number of interrelated items, namely, progressive consolidation of the authority of the Nation State, expansion of communication and transport, establishment of urban centres, introduction of improved technology in the exploitation of natural resources

spread of education, medical facilities and other modern amenities of life which, go to constitute the exogenous aspect of modernisation in the hills of North-East India. He examines these factors in a manner which brings out as to how these towns have become the focal point of endogenous growth and spread of a new ferment in the region.

In the second part of his paper he brings out the salient features of the endogenous growth and suggests factors like introduction of improved technology, re-examination of their changing values, change in the social and prestige structure, spread of education, search for a new horizon, diversification of sources of tradition etc.

In the light of the examination of exogenous and endogenous factors, he suggests that the different facets of modernisation in diverse contexts bring out the fact that there is no simple straight course of modernisation. It is taking place in the hills of North-East India through many twists and turns, sometimes blindly dashing forward towards a brave new future, sometimes splashing back to a belief in the past, under the feeling of being haunted by a dangerous present. Sometimes steering steadily over the waves of the present and sometimes standing still and contemplating the probable directions of the winds of change, like the diversity of human situations, the course of modernisation is also diverse in the hills of North-East India as perhaps in any other part of the world.

In an analytical paper on structure of bridge and buffer communities in the border areas Dr. B.K. Roy Burman⁹⁵ describes the function of tribes who live between two powerful neighbours, powerful either economically or politically. Seeking examples from the study of the Toto and the Naga tribe he suggests how this leads to segmentation among some of these bridge and buffer tribes. The nature and segmentation in his opinion has varied in accordance with the function performed by the tribes. He explains as to how one group of the Toto is placed inside Bhutan. These two groups formed on the basis of clan divisions link the Nech and the Koch in the south with the Bhutiyas and the Dayas of the north. This organisational divide admirably qualifies Toto for playing the role of a bridge between the two sets of "buffer" or conflicting tribes. Such a 'bridge' maintains the flow of commodities undisturbed during the period of active hostilities between the Kochis and Bhutiyas. He refers to the Mishmis in NEFA who play the bridge role, and serve as a sort of link for maintaining commercial and political contacts between the tribes of the north like the Abors on the one land and the tribes of the south and east on the other.

Among the communities which appeared to have served the role of buffers between two or more aggressive tribes mention of the Kukis has been made. They functioned according to the author, as 'buffer' between the Mizos on the one hand and the Nagas on the other. For effective functioning as 'Buffer', they have to adopt a different kind of organisational strategy from the one described in the case of the 'bridge' communities. The Kukis do not constitute a single tribe; a number of several tribes are considered as belonging to the Kuki group. Some of them like the Hmars are more closely related to the Nagas. They are fringe communities but both the types of fringe communities are considered to be historically related to the core of the Kuki tribe. In the past this sort of structural regimentation allowed the Kukis to have fringe identification of conflict with the dominant aggressive group in contact while the core remained free to serve as a shock-absorber.

In understanding the bridge and the buffer roles of a tribe the presence of segmentation is necessary. But there is a fundamental difference between the two types of segmentation. In the case of 'bridge' community the segmentation is 'ritual' in character, while in the case of a 'buffer'

community the segmentation is 'political'. In the case of the 'bridge' community the segments constitute parts of the same tribe while in the case of the 'buffer' tribe the segments of distinct tribes differ from one another. If, inspite of these differences they are considered to be one, it is at the secondary level and this is because of a more or less common pattern of political relationships with the neighbouring tribes. Roy Burman has thus tried to conceptualise the inter-tribal relationships among the north-eastern tribes. however, it remains for him to describe the above model in the light of available ethnographic materials in a more concrete and clear form.

Another work⁹⁶ which has been edited and improved upon by Roy Burman is a village study monograph on Waromung, an Ao Naga village. This book running into one hundred and three pages with one hundred and seven pages of appendices, photographs, maps and sketches was prefaced by Roy Burman with the active assistance of his Naga investigator, Alemchiba Ao, who trained in anthropology, is the first Naga anthropologist to investigate and write the first socio-economic study of a village in Nagaland. The village, Waromung, was selected for the survey as it happens to be the home village of Ao. It was even difficult for Ao to conduct a socio-economic survey in Nagaland even in his home village under the prevailing hostile conditions. However, he acted both as investigator and as an informant and a set of schedules were drawn up by Roy Burman for the field investigations. He personally visited the area and gave on the spot suggestions to Alemchiba for canvassing the schedule and filling in the gaps in investigation.

This first village study of Nagaland is the product of the joint efforts of Ao and Roy Burman, and was prepared to serve as a model study for conducting other village studies in Nagaland. In a series of five chapters the basic information about the general settings of the village, the characteristics of the people, the economic and occupational pattern of the village and the social and cultural life of the villagers have been faithfully and statistically described. The monograph presents a dynamic picture of the village and shows that it has been in the vortex of change for quite some time. In 1881 the first Christian missionary came to the village, almost at the same time as the British administration was extended to the area. In the wake of these changes came stoppage of inter-village feuds and head-hunting, spread of education and expansion of casual employment opportunities in the tea-estates of Assam. Then came the Second World War and invasion of some portions of Nagaland by the Japanese, followed in quick succession by the departure of the British and the growth of hostile activities by a section of the Nagas.

In the post-Independence period a massive programme of economic and social development has been undertaken in this area and in the course of a few years the whole hillside will be transformed into a mosaic of terraced fields.

In the socio-religious sphere as well the author has described numerous changes but along with changes the revival of drama and dance as well as numerous values and symbols of the past are also visible. The clan organisation and the age-group system which constitute hard cores of the Ao social structure continue to persist. Some of the non-Christian rituals like the commencement of the burning of trees for shifting cultivation on the seventh day after the full moon in March and the avoiding of discords during community feasting also continue.

Concluding, Roy Burman in the light of pattern of change summarizes that while there have been far-reaching changes in certain affairs, there is unexpected persistance in certain others. In this context he raises the question as to whether this disproves the anthropological dictum of "functional interrelatedness" and "dynamic equilibrium of culture". According to functional

scheme of anthropologists one part of element of culture is related to other part. The different elements function in unison. When change in one part of culture takes place, the other part also get adjust with corresponding change. If such process does not operate, the entire system becomes dysfunctional or afunctional. Although he considers it beyond the scope of this rapid survey report to attempt an analysis of this phenomenon, he casually mentions that the functional inter-relatedness and dynamic equilibrium are maintained by the shift in the core traits and the marginal or peripheral traits. He also refers to changes in certain spheres, and that persistence in others taken together, should be considered as the story of a "little community at a low level of technology trying to find its way through the dazzled alleys of the modern world."

Thus the efforts of Alemchiba Ao and B.K. Roy Burman to present a "gestalt" of the village have been well rewarded. Roy Burman's efforts, as mentioned in the foreword by Ashok Mitra, in making experiments, in striking new lines in methodology and designs of schedules, new methods of tabulation and cross-tabulation, new lines of correlating and training his colleagues and assistants vigorously in Social Science are well regarded and similar village monographs on the other Naga communities will go a long way in enriching our knowledge.

The Census operations of India as a part of the 1961 Census published a number of village monographs on the tribal villages of north-eastern India. In continuation of this and other programmes of demographic analysis undertaken by the Census in the Social Studies Division, Roy Burman published a volume which brings out an integrated picture of the hill tribes of North-Eastern India.⁹⁷

The hill areas of North-East India covered in this volume consist of (1) Darjeeling district of West Bengal, (2) autonomous hill districts of Assam (Garo hills, United Khasi and Jaintia hills, United Mikir and North Cachar hills and Mizo hills), (3) Frontier Agency, (4) Nagaland and (5) the hilly tracts of Manipur and Tripura.

Roy Burman presents an analysis of statistical and other facts and figures relating to North-East India. In addition to presenting factual information, he gives certain ethnographic details about a number of village communities of Garo hills-Resubakapara, United Khasi and Jaintia Hills-Modymmai, Maquai, United Mikir and North Cachar Hills-Lacsong, Phonjanjra, Gonjung, Mizo Hills-Lawngtalaj, Durtlong, NEFA-Momong, Koreng, Sibuk, Jeva Dalbing, Jia, Ramsing, Rupa, Nagaland-Waromung an Ao Naga village, Manipur-Keisamthong, Thongjing Chiru, Longa, Koireng, Tripura-Dwarika Talukdar Para. These brief notes based on the village survey monographs present a dynamic picture of persistence and change in these tribal villages. the note on Waromung village for example brings out as to how there has been complete transformation in the life of the people during the last three generations owing to the introduction of Christianity. With the stoppage of head-hunting in the village a number of consequential changes have occurred, which have been enumerated as follows⁹⁸:

1. People are more free to move about for cultivation, visiting markets etc.
2. More frequent inter-village marriages.
3. Disappearance of Morung Institution.
4. No war drum and no wood carrying, symbolising the achievements in head-hunting.
5. Less labour to guard the village.

6. Less village entries (entry-points).
7. Less active habits among the people.
8. Less discipline.

The villages studied again bring to light comparative facts regarding shifting cultivation. The villagers give the following reasons for their attachment to shifting cultivation⁹⁹:

1. Nature of terrain is unfit for wet or terrace cultivation.
2. Plots for wet cultivation are small and scattered.
3. Fear of wild animals inhibiting people from reaching the scattered plots fit for wet cultivation.
4. Difficulty in making roads to reach the scattered plots fit for wet cultivation at long distances.
5. Rivers are deep and it is difficult to construct irrigation channels.
6. Lack of finance for irrigation.

The monograph also gives a brief note on a small town located in the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills district. It has a population of 6,196 persons with a density of 2,065 persons per square mile. This tribal town still lacks a municipality, and modern amenities are at the lowest. A chapter has also been appended on the voluntary organisations functioning in the hills of North East India. These voluntary organisation have been classified into three categories (1) ethnic organisations, (2) social service agencies of secular and religious nature, and (3) political parties.

The last chapter summarises the salient features of the demographic and socio-economic profiles of the hill areas of North-East India. Roy Burman, examining the diverse facts of ecological adaptation, brings out many aspects of significant similarities and differences among the tribal communities of North-East India. Racially they all belong to the Mongoloid group and historically many of them have traditions of their origin from Tibet, South China and parts of South Asia. Linguistically, the dialects of these diverse tribal communities can be broadly grouped into two: (1) Austric family and (2) Tibeto-Chinese family. In terms of material culture, he points out the similarities starting from the coast of the Pacific ocean to Nagaland and beyond.

Along with these similarities, the differences are on the levels of technology, in the concentration of political power, in the pattern of political organisation, and in the details of social organisation. The tribes like the Apa Tanis, Angamis and Tangkhul Nagas display high skill in water management and building-up terraces; the tribes like the Khasis and Lushais have flourishing horticulture; on the other hand, the vast majority of the tribals practise shifting cultivation. As regards political organisations the autocratic type leadership among the Mizo-Kuki group of tribes is followed by a republican type among the Angami Nagas and their satellite tribes. It is followed by a mixed type of leadership of the Nagas and the autocratic type of leadership of the Sema, Konyak and Agnate tribes and the Noktas. The political organisation of the Adi group is republican, that of the Dafla group who follow the organisation of the Sherdukpen and the Monpas is subdued oligarchy under the influence of the Lamaist monastery of Tawang.

In the sphere of social organisation it is well-known that the region has tribals both of the matrilineal and patrilineal types which are at different levels of transformation.

The other significant differences among the tribal communities of the region include internal integration, formal association based on voluntary membership, and socio-economic formation. Roy Burman brings out as to how among the Ao Nagas it is attained through the community of tradition and ideology of the original settlers, and at the same time, by making adjustments in the share of political power. Among the Sherdukpens, it is based on the recognition rights of an oligarchy. Among the Khasis and the Garos, inter-linkage of segmental lineages provide the base for social and political integration.

These similarities and differences according to Roy Burman have influenced the process of continuous shift in the alignment and amalgamation of the tribal communities of the North-East. The similarities have certainly promoted a certain common outlook and way of life among the various ethnic groups of the region. They have again provided a common milieu which the ethnic group concerned could draw upon whenever they have tried to build up any particular type of alliances.

In addition to providing, thus, a new lead in comparative ethnography of tribal regions in India, Roy Burman gives a theoretical insight to understand the roles of the tribal communities in terms of his 'bridge' and 'buffer' concepts. He had developed this concept earlier in his study of the Totos and examined this concept in terms of the historical and social structure relationships between the "Bridge and Buffer" communities. Though this study is quite rich in substantive reporting and methodological lead, Roy Burman promises to offer more analytical studies on the North-Eastern hill tribes combining the historical, ecological and social anthropological perspectives.

In a paper read at the Simla Seminar on Urgent Anthropological Researches in India, Bhagabati¹⁰⁰ briefly refers to some of the earlier researches in Assam and comments that till recently field research in the North-East region has largely remained bound by the traditions of Classical Anthropology. He finds little evidence of presenting ethnographic material in an interpretative manner. He notes the continuance of the same tradition in the studies of the 'NEFA tribes' undertaken by several anthropologists under the guidance of Verrier Elwin in the late fifties. Among the contemporary publications he considers Burling's study of the Garo village and Furer Haimendorf's study of the Apa Tanis as positive contributions to social anthropology as the findings have been properly analysed and interpreted. He, however, makes no reference to the excellent monograph of T.C. Das on the Purums, mentioned above.

In the second portion of his paper Bhagabati examines the need for field research among the communities of the plains of Assam and enumerates some problems for research which need to be taken for studies on priority basis. He refers to the functioning of the new economic, social, and political forces which are in operation in every part of Assam and have made considerable impact on the ways of life of both the hill and the plains people.

He also points out the gross neglect on the part of the anthropologists to study the plain regions of Assam as it is of great significance from historical, sociological and practical points of view. He refers to Goswami's¹⁰¹ view to establish that "in many ways even our studies of the hill tribals and their social, cultural and economic relations will remain vague and imperfect unless complementary research is undertaken among the peasants of the plains." Bhagabati suggests

that a variety of problems such as the manner in which a regional caste structure forms and operates, the nature and degree of integration of non-Hindus (Muslims and tribals) into the regional societies, the character of the peasantry, or the integrative functions of the new sacred centres of the Hindus could be taken up for study. He also suggests that more intensive problem-oriented research in the Assam plains promises interesting results for comparison with the rest of India.

Referring to the specific problems of enquiry he suggests six-fold items for the immediate attention of anthropologists to be undertaken in the plains of Assam. These are (1) study of typical village communities from the three major cultural areas of the Brahmaputra plains, (2) study of social relations between tribals and Hindu peasants, (3) study of social relation between the inhabitants of the hills and the plains, (4) study of social organisation of the sacred centres and their integrative function, (5) the growing social tensions and conflicts between various communities and (6) other problems of social change as reflected in the recent political development and urban industrial growth of Assam.

Bhagabati also refers to the limited interests of the Census Operations, the Shillong Branch of Anthropological Survey of India and the Department of Anthropology of Gauhati University which have undertaken some researches in this area from time to time and makes a plea for strengthening these organisations for more focussed researches in this area.

In a seminar on The Tribal Situation in India held at Simla, B.B. Goswami and D.N. Majumdar in two separate papers emphasise the need for the study of the tribe-caste interactions in Assam. Goswami¹⁰² in his paper deals with the socio-cultural relationships between the tribes and non-tribes of Assam who live in varied ecological conditions, with divergent types of economic organisations, linguistic groupings and social, structural and religious set-up. He examines the tribal-non-tribal interactions in historical periods. He refers to the Ahoms, a Shan tribe of Burma, who ruled Northern Assam as early as the 10th-12th century A.D. He also refers to the Koch Kings of the 18th century who worked for the expansion of Hinduism and of the Cachari tribes who established the Cachari Hindu Kingdom in the 18th century. In the light of these historical materials, he goes on to conclude that the tribes of the plains who were having small territories all over the Brahmaputra valleys were exposed to the people who came in hordes from Northern Bengal and Burma and encouraged miscegenation of the races in the plains and at the foot-hills. Goswami in the light of his field researches refers to a number of Satras (monasteries) which have influenced the plain tribes and have converted them to Vaishnavism.

Goswami discusses interactions between the tribals and non-tribals of the plains, of the foot-hills and of the hill regions of Assam in the sphere of trade and economy, in the matters of religious beliefs and practices, participation in fairs, festivals and markets and in kinship and marriage. In the light of these materials he goes on to conclude that as Assam is inhabited by different types of races and cultures, its ethnic mobility are being integrated with Hinduism or Christianity depending upon the dominant religion of the area. He suggests that while the tribe-caste continuum as observed in peninsular India by Surajit Sinha¹⁰³ is noticed here in this region only in the valleys and the foot-hills, it is generally absent in the Mizo-hills of Assam.

In another paper presented in the same seminar Majumdar¹⁰⁴ examines the processes of tribe-caste continuum and of Sanskritisation as reflected among the Bodo-speaking tribes of the Garo hills. He divides the Garo district into two distinct geographical regions: (1) The hem, covering entirely the northern, western and southern borders of the district. This hem consists of

fertile flatland and is inhabited by the more or less Sanskritised group, the Rabha, the Boro, the Koch, the Hajong, the Dalu and the Hindu Garo, (2) the Hilly Central Region, which is the western half of the Meghalaya Plateau is inhabited exclusively by the Songsarek and the Christian Garo. Majumdar goes on to present a precise definition of tribe, caste and Sanskritisation, and suggests that these tribes of the hilly areas are at different levels of tribe-caste continuum and at different processes of Sanskritisation. The three groups, the Rabha, the Koch and the Hajong represent the three self-contained continuations, ranging from border-line cases between the tribes and castes to pure cases, almost equivalent in status with the Dalu. The Hindu Garos like the Dalus claim themselves as belonging to the Bengali Vaishnava sect and all the aspect of Sanskritisation accepted by the Dalus have also been accepted by the Hindu Garos. They are also served unconditionally by Brahmin priests and thus occupy in the caste hierarchy the top position among the three groups of the Rabha, the Koch and the Hajong.

Majumdar points out the difficulty in placing the tribes between the two poles of the tribe-caste continuum and in the absence of measurable variables, he suggests three "steps" in the process of Sanskritisation. The first step of Sanskritisation is the abandonment of the unclean non-Hindu habits the foremost of which is beef-eating, and of eating pork and fowl. The second step of Sanskritisation is the abandonment or partial abandonment of non-Hindu deities and the gradual adoption of deities of the Hindu pantheon along with their traditional rites. The final step in the process of Sanskritisation is characterised with the abandonment of all the major elements of the tribal social customs such as the clan organisation with all its ancillary aspects, such as matrilineal inheritance, uxorilocal residence, clan oriented kinship system and taking up in their place the Hindu patrilineal complex. Majumdar places the respective tribes and sections of tribes under these stages of Sanskritisation and points out the various patterns of Sanskritisation in respect of the respective tribe.

In the same seminar on the Tribal Situation in India held at Simla Dr. Erring¹⁰⁵ a political leader and Minister of State for Agriculture in the government of India, contributed a problem-oriented paper on the tribal region of North-East Frontier Agency. He firstly gives a brief history of the administration of the area which was first conceived as early as 1892 as parts of Lakhimpur and Darrang districts of Assam under the charge of the Deputy Commissioners of those districts. Since then, on several occasions, administrative changes have been made and the present region of NEFA consisting of the five divisions of Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap emerged as the last administrative change in 1957. The present NEFA is a mountainous 'house-shoe' shaped territory bounded on the west by Bhutan, with which it has a common border of nearly 300 Kms., on the north by Tibet, on the east by Burma separated by the Patkoi Hills, on the south by the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. With Tibet it has a common frontier, right from the Bhutan border eastward to the tri-junction of India, Burma and China at the extreme north-east. This border is about 1000 Kms. long and has passes along some high peaks of eastern Himalayan ranges.

Alongwith this geostrategic location, NEFA is very sparsely populated. The first Census of NEFA conducted in 1961 turns out the population of 3,36,558 in an area of 81,426 sq. Kms. The density of population works out to 4.13 per sq. Km. which is the lowest in India. With the total number of 245 villages in the whole of NEFA, the average population per village comes to 137. Of the five districts in NEFA Lohit is the most sparsely populated with a density of 1.5 per sq. Km. only, while Tirap is thickly populated with a density of 8.43 per sq. Km.

NEFA is a land of great diversity of people, culture and tradition. The 82 ethnic groups identified in NEFA speak their own respective dialects and reflect certain cultural distinctiveness. Along with great diversity in NEFA, there are, however, certain essentially common and discernible characteristics amongst the people, such as the setting up of their village on hill-tops, their pile dwellings, shifting cultivation, meat-eating with hardly any reservations, aversion to milk and milk products, ample drinking of rice beer, weaving on loin-looms, and the absence of money economy amongst many tribes or sub-tribes, aversion towards cow-dung as manure. And then there are qualities of the NEFA people like their exceptional co-operative sense of living and working, self-reliance, hospitality, courage in the face of very difficult conditions of living by any standard, gay and cheerful disposition.

In the light of the ethnographic data and an up-to-date factual information about the ethnological setting of NEFA, Erring goes on to examine the occupational structure and economic conditions of the people of NEFA. He finds their economy revolving round 'Jhum cultivation' which truly speaking, is a way of life for the people of NEFA. In the light of the detailed discussion about shifting cultivation Erring observes that:

Whatever the people of NEFA do, there are cogent reasons behind their ways of doing things. The climate, the terrain, their good-habits, their requirements, their self-reliance, their social customs, all have a say on the system of cultivation that they practice. It has been evolved by the experience of generations and is well set in its original home:

Errings also refers to the introduction of permanent cultivation of rice which is cultivated year after year as in other parts of India. With the assistance of the Government during the 22 years after independence, nearly 10,000 hectares of land in NEFA has been brought under 'permanent cultivation' of rice. Some tribes in the foothill belts of NEFA have nearly left the method of shifting cultivation of their own accord and there are other tribes who are practising both the shifting and the permanent.

In the light of the recommendations of several committees including the Renuka Roy Committee, the Dhebar Commission, the E.A.O. Enquiry Committee, the Committee on Special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks and latest, the research conducted by the National Committee of Applied Economic Research, Erring makes a strong plea to take into account the socio-economic conditions of the people, before any efforts are made for their 'geographical' rehabilitation. He refers to the trend of shortening the cycle of shifting cultivation specially under the pressure of population and suggests that the problem of shifting cultivation should be studied in an integrated manner by a team of different specialists.

Erring goes on to discuss various other problems of agriculture, community development programme, cottage and village industries, animal husbandry, fisheries, communication, education, administration and ends with a note on economic inter-dependence. According to him NEFA can be divided literally into three distinct belts: (i) the northern belt along the international border, (ii) the middle belt and (iii) the southern belt along the border with Assam. The people of NEFA living in the northern belt had some economic dependence on Tibet for items like wool, milk products, Tibetan brass-ware etc. Trade and barter with Tibet sustained a setback when China occupied Tibet and they stopped completely from 1962, after the Chinese aggression on India. The NEFA Administration has opened up border area shops in the northern belt to provide the yarn, salt, tea and such other articles and owing to these their economy is getting established. The tribes in the middle belt are self-sufficient and economically

independent. The absence of road communications has kept them aloof from excessive exposure, and except, of course, the salt which is provided by the administration, they grow or produce everything they need. The people of the southern belt, however, are economically dependent on Assam. The demand for consumer goods in this belt is steadily rising and which they obtain from the plains of Assam. The increasing demand of consumer goods is attributable to the economic well-being of the people of this belt. In exchange for the consumer goods the items for the surplus agricultural produce, which find a market in the plains of Assam are, mustard, maize, ginger, chillies and betal leaves.

Ering, thus, presents a total picture of the people of NEFA. In the light of his own long and continuous field experience as well as the administrative insights, he has brought out the relevant information about the NEFA tribes and highlighted their varied problems. In the capacity of a Minister he has also full acquaintance with the administrative plans and their implementation in this area and has ably reviewed the change that has taken place in the various walks of life of the people of NEFA since India's independence. Though Ering is not a trained anthropologist, and has not presented the paper with a methodological bias, he has been able to acquaint the general reader with up to date facts about NEFA.

Lastly, North-East India has become a focus of number of studies, covering almost all the aspects of life and culture of the people of this area. In addition to individual researches, many organizations have also been established which are engaged in researches on the different tribes. Mention may be made of different University departments in Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Shillong which regularly publish journals. The department of Anthropology in Dibrugarh University is publishing an annual bulletin in which, at an average, about fifteen scholarly papers on different tribes covering almost the entire North-East India are published. The Department of Economics, in the same University is publishing "Assam Economic Journal" annually which covers the economic aspect of the people of North-East India generally, and the state of Assam particularly.

The "Agro-Economic Research Centre for North - East India"¹⁰⁶ of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, Assam, is also making significant contribution in this regard. Its focus of studies so far completed is two-pronged Socio-Economic Studies in rural change, and Ad-hoc studies. The former, again, is of two types—First Point Village Surveys under which are included, "Rural Life in Assam Hills: Socio-economic Study of Four Hill villages of Assam", "Kathaliacherra; A Jhumia Settlement Colony in Tripura"; "Morangaon: A plains village in the Sibsagar district of Assam"; "Potsangham: A Plains village in Manipur" etc.; while the other type, village Resurveys include "Dispur: A Plains village near Guwahati" and "Change in Mikir Society: A Jhum Village in the Mikir Hill of Assam". The Ad-hoc studies of this centre are also very extensive: "co-operative farming in Assam", "Farmer's Response to Improved Agricultural Practices under I.A.D.P.", "The Rice Economy of Manipur", "The problems of Agricultural Development in the Hill Areas of North-East India", and "Assessment of colonisation scheme of shifting cultivators in Tripura" etc.

"The North-Eastern Council for Social Science Research"¹⁰⁷ based at Shillong, is publishing its bi-annual journal which contains a good number of papers on different aspects of life and culture in North-East India. Its October 1983 issue published eleven articles and two book-reviews. The articles ranged from "Food Economy of Meghalaya," "Age at menarche among the Khasi women of Meghalaya" to "Emerging pattern of Rural Leadership in Assam."

The Directorate of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh,¹⁰⁸ Shillong, is another organisation engaged in researches on Arunachal Pradesh, its "People, culture, language and heritages. It has so far published many monographs as well as books on local languages. Mention may be made of "The Noctes" (Parul Dutta), "The Boris" (K. Kumar), "The Hill Miris", (B.B. Pandey), "Festival of Kameng" (R.K. Deuri), "Tawang Monastery" (N. Sirkar) "Wancho Love Songs" (T.K.M. Baruah), "Milong Phrase Book" (A. Tayeng), and "The Tangs language" (K. Dasgupta) etc.

The growing awareness of the profound cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial and economic diversity manifested by the indigenous people inhabiting the North-East India, as well as the equally divergent problems that they face has resulted, in recent times, in attempts to organise seminars and symposia. Many such seminars and symposia have taken place in a bid to highlight, understand and interpret the complexities of the socio-cultural phenomena, and to arrive at, if possible, some conclusion which could go a long way in ameliorating the conditions of the people.

A national seminar on 'Hill People of North Eastern India', for the first time in the history of India, was held in Calcutta from 3rd to 6th December 1966, which was attended by more than a hundred eminent representatives of the hill people, and an even larger number of social workers, scholars, administrators and intellectuals of the plains. The proceedings of this important seminar was published in a book form entitled "A Common perspective for North East India."¹⁰⁹

The papers presented in this seminar highlighted different social, cultural, economic and political problems affecting the hill people of North-East India, and pointed to the need for vigorous, unbiased, and national thinking on these problems. It emphasised that narrow, limited administrative approach would be a poor, insufficient and ineffective substitute for such thinking in attempts to find answers to these intriguing problems.

The papers presented in the seminar and published in the book presented a variety of approaches, outlooks and opinions. These were categorized into ten categories: Speeches, General Introduction, Cultural History, Anthropology, Social Studies, Political Evaluation, Economic Development, Christianity, Education and Law. Among the speeches Rev. Dr. H.L.J. De Mel (Metropolitan of India, Burma, Pakistan and Cylon) stressed upon the need to develop a sense of fellowship among the human beings, which, to him, was the real progress; and that the attitude to face the diversity should be tolerance, followed by sympathy and appreciation. N.K. Bose, an eminent anthropologist, scoffed at the covert or overt demands of a separate state for each tribal community in the North-East, made by even educated people of these communities, who fear that their culture would be lost under one Assam State dominated by plains Assamese and will continue the centuries old exploitation. He maintained that economic development can be achieved even in a single integrated state in a national perspective. Dr. Surajit Sinha, another anthropologist spoke on the social integration of the hill tribes and the plains people. He also argued that integration was more important, even essential, for the development of these people rather than political segregation.

In the category "Cultural History", seven papers were published. These were "Assamese Culture and the Hill people of North-Eastern India" by Dr. B.M. Das, "The Language of Tripura" by C.R. Goswami, "Language and Literacy in the North-Eastern region" by Dr. Suhas Chatterjee, "Role of Superstitions and Beliefs Among Indian Tribes" by P.C. Roy, "Music of the Hill people of North-Eastern India" by Sukumar Roy, "Social and Cultural Changes in the Hill

Areas of North East India" by Rev. B.N. Pugh, and "Khasi Literature" by Hamlet Bareh.

In the "Anthropology" category the papers presented were, "The Naga Search for Self Identity", by Dr. P. Moasosang, "Anthropology and The Tribes of Assam" by N.K. Shyamchoudhary, "Social organisation of the Koch of Garo Hill, Assam" by D.N. Majumdar, "The Society in Transition in the Mizo District" by Amit Kumar Nag, and "A Point of view on the Garos in Transition" by Parimal Chandra Kar.

"The Social Studies" category includes the papers "An outlook for better understanding of the Tribal people" by Rev. Hrilrokhum Theck, "Problems of integration and Administration", by P.N. Luthra, "Hillmen of North East India and Tensions of Socio-economic Development" by Dr. B.K. Roy Burman, and "The Hill People of Manipur" by Achaw Singh.

Nine papers were under the "Political Evaluation" category. These were "A Brief Scheme for the Formation of Hill States" by S.M. Das, "Political Developments in Tribal Bihar" by Dr. (Mrs.) Jyoti Sen, "A Scheme for a Zonal Government in the Eastern Region" by Jatin Dey, "Troubled Frontier" by Harish Chandola, "A Possible Avenue of Approach to the Nagas and other Tribals" by M. Horam, "NEFA: Its History of Administration and The Problem of Integration" by Biswajit Sen, "Politics in the Hill Areas of North-East India" by Rev. B.M. Pugh, "Why the Hills and Plains do not unite?" by S.R. Thaosen, and "Integrated Study of the Hillmen of Assam" by Major Sita Ram Johari.

The papers on "Economic Development" were "Economic Development of Tribal Areas" by Dr. J.B. Ganguly, "A note on the Agricultural Background of the Assam Hills" by J.K. Barthkum, "Development of Tribal Economics in the Hill Areas" by Tarlok Singh, "Communication Between the Hills and the Plains" by C.L. Rema, "The Economy of the Dimasa Cachari of the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills" by Dipali Ghosh, "Economic Development in the Hill Areas in the Perspective of the 5 year plan" by Rev. B.M. Pugh, "Patterns of Economic Enterprises in the Hill Areas of North East India" by Hamlet Bareh.

The large scale proselytization by Christian Missions was the subject of four papers viz. "The Hill Tribes of Assam and Christianity" by Dr. P.C. Goswami, "Christianity and the Tribal Problem" by the Bishop of Chotanagpur (Ranchi), Christianity and the Tribes of North East India" by Rev. B.M. Pugh and "Beginning of Christian work in the Hill Areas of North East India Region" by Rev. Austen John.

Two more papers were presented, one on "Some observations on the Hill Tribal Students of North Eastern India" by Rev. Austen John, and "Tribal Society and Indian Law" by U. Jor Manik Syiem.

The above papers, and the ensuing discussions brought to the fore the divergent socio-cultural, political, economic and historical differences among the people of North-East India. Although this seminar did not aim at arriving at any solutions to the problems, it provided a platform to evolve a common perspective—an essential first step in the face of conflicting and contradictory values and opinions—and successfully did so.

In June 1979, the Department of Philosophy of North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong organised a seminar on "Religion and Society of North East India".¹¹⁰ The religion, the ideology, is a great uniting as well dividing factor, uniting a homogeneous and dividing a heterogeneous group. As such, the study of religion in North-East India commends itself when viewed in the

background of a great diversity in religious beliefs and practices. This gives rise to the feeling of "We" and "They" creating a disharmony in a heterogeneous society, as the North-Eastern Region is composed of. The said seminar was not exhaustive in coverage as only two papers each were presented on the religions of Khasi and Naga tribes, others were ignored. A couple of papers dealt with Christianisation and acculturation.

THE NEW MONOGRAPHS

As mentioned earlier a large number of books have also been published in recent times which deal with different aspects of life and culture of the tribes inhabiting North-East region. We shall now take up a few of the important ones. The monograph on the Riang by Bhabananda Mukherjee¹¹¹ which was scheduled to be released in 1959 in the Bulletin on the Department of Anthropology was actually released in 1970. As the author has failed to give the details regarding the methodology including place and duration of fieldwork, it is difficult to examine it from the relevant angle. As regards the substantive aspects of the monograph it mainly deals with the social groupings and social institutions and link them with their rituals and religious beliefs and practices. An exclusive chapter is devoted to the changes that have occurred among this tribe in terms of social, political, economic and religious organisations. The Riangs inhabiting the State of Tripura specially in the territory of the Naini Hills near the Gomati river were chosen for field researches. the author examines the history of the Riangs who were in contact with the kings of Tripura. they believe that they migrated from Chittagong and on their arrival the king of Tripura honoured the regional chiefs with clothes and ornaments for their integrity and loyalty. The Riangs numbering 38,556 in 1951 were mainly shifting cultivators and have supplemented their economy either with labour or wet cultivation.

Mukherjee undertakes a special analysis of the Riang's social groupings in terms of family organisation and structural relationships and suggests that their social structure was based on the joint family system with patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence.

While examining social institutions he described the political traditions, marriage rituals and customs, rules of residence, the various rituals, and death rites in the light of concrete facts and case studies. While writing about the choice of spouses, he brings out the broader concept of purity and population and indicates as to how a widow, a widower and divorced persons are supposed to carry impurity, and as such they are not permitted to participate in any social functions except the post-funeral rituals. In examining the rules of residence he mentions the customs of *Chamaroikami* or *Chamavitoenai* which makes it obligatory for a man to stay and work in the house of his wife immediately after his marriage for three years. He collects case studies of 11 person following this rule with certain variations in the period of stay and brings to light the three significant aspects of this custom: (1) mythological (2) ceremonial and (3) socio-economic.

Devoting two chapters to religion and rituals, Mukherjee describes the concepts of creation, deities, evil spirits and ghosts, of good and evil, of body and soul, of dream and of disease etc. He observes that the rituals and festivals are aimed at: (1) general welfare, (2) ample crops, (3) progeny, (4) purification, (5) protection against attacks of wild animals, epidemics, wrath of deities and evil spirits, mis-carriage and disease, (6) good health, (7) longevity and (8) integration of kin, clansmen and members of the community.

In the end Mukherjee goes on to describe the phases of change that have taken place among the Riangs in recent history. He goes on to suggest the five situations through which the Riangs have passed. The first was tribe's contact with the ruling community including the Kings of Tripura who were Hindu Kshatriyas practising Hindu religion and worshipping the Hindu Gods. The second contact was with the Mags who taught them the techniques of plough cultivation sometime in 1880 which resulted in a shift in their economy. The third situation was marked by the preaching of Vaishnavism in 1935 which resulted in acceptance by several Riangs of the worship of Krishna and Shiva. The fourth situation was caused by the removal of the tribal chief in 1940 against the customary rules which resulted in the division of the Riangs into two rival groups. The last and the most recent situation of contact was caused by the establishment of the rehabilitation colonies of the Bengalee Hindu refugees since 1944. These situations brought about several changes in the Riangs' social structure and religion which have been mentioned categorically under different headings. He refers, for example, to the breakdown of the joint family structure, disorganisation of the council of the chief, decline of parallel cousin marriage; acceptance of plough cultivation by about 55 per cent families, disuse of buffalo sacrifice, increase of those following the Vaishnavite Bhakti cult, borrowing of Hindu concept of *Marma*, *Bhut*, *Pret* (evil spirits) etc. The rate of change was evidently varied in different aspects of Riang life and Mukherjee's analysis suggests that maximum changes have occurred in the religious sphere while changes in family and clan kinship level are minimal. At a level of generality the Riang culture by imbibing new cultural traits and ideas from Hinduism was being integrated into the realm of Hindu civilisation. But this process of smooth transformation to the Hindu way of life was disturbed due to internal dissensions in 1940 which created conflicting groups and impeded steady progress of transformation.

The next monograph written jointly by N.K. Shyam Chaudhury and M.M. Das¹¹² is based on their fieldwork among the Lalung tribe in year 1959-61 under the special schemes of the Anthropological Survey of India to study little known tribal groups in 1955. Though the framework of this book is ethnographic, the materials have been handled in a sophisticated and comparative manner highlighting the structure of the Lalung society.

The Lalungs living mainly on the plains of Assam belong to the great Bodo linguistic group. Having a population of 61,351 in 1961 Census, the Lalungs live in the two ecological areas of the Mikir hills and the upper reaches of the rivers Umiam, Berepaul and Kupili. They live in scattered and mixed villages. Though these two regions are distinct topographically, the mainstay of the Lalung agriculture is paddy. This could be taken as an indication that the Lalungs have carried to the hills the economy of wet rice cultivation. This eco-cultural question has been evaluated by the authors in terms of ethnological and historical explanations. In this frame of the eco-cultural system they find the Lalungs occupying an intermediate position between the peoples of two distinct cultures, those of Cacharis of the plains and the Khasi tribes living south and east of them in the hills.

Shyam Chaudhury and Das in the background of ecological and historical settings of Lalung go to describe the Lalung village organisation with special reference to two carefully chosen villages-Member and Amswoi—and bring out the unity of the village manifested in its corporate life. They identify an integrated system for maintaining a proper mode of conduct and co-operation between individual families and clans. Such as spirit of community life flows from the institution of the youth dormitory, the *Chamadi*.

They go on to describe the structure and functions of the youth dormitory which are mainly meant for: (1) training to boys in tribal values, customs and folkways, (2) developing personality and leadership, and then (3) to enjoy leisure collectively. Next to the youth dormitory in the corporate life of the village, is the *Khel*. The authors after identifying these two important village institutions—*Chamadi* and *Khel*, the territorial division of the village, which is the primary unit and nobody can go against the wishes of its leader. Usually one elderly person from each group of families who are closely related from the council is member of *Khel*. They maintain social discipline and settle disputes in the *Khel*, go on to compare these with other important tribes of North-East India, bringing out their similarities and differences in their organisation and functions. In my opinion such a comparative study not only helps us in understanding their unity and uniqueness at the regional level but, at a level of abstraction, helps us in understanding the human organisation as such.

Their analysis of the clan organisation of this matrilineal community in relation to marriage and family on the one hand and their comparison with other matrilineal tribes on the other are rich not only in substantive presentation but also in theoretical analysis. They identify two to four clusters of clans in each Lalung village. The clusters of the Maharis as they are known, are twelve in number, mythologically linked with one of the twelve sisters. Other clans have descended from female siblings in the generation next to the original twelve ancestresses.

They also analyse the structural position of mother's brother and point out that in spite of basic similarities in their position in the Khasi and Lalung societies the lineal emphasis of consanguinity in the line of the male is perhaps stronger in the Lalung society. They report about the changes that have been undergoing in the Lalungs' matrilineal structural pattern. On the basis of an analysis of the residence-pattern, clan by clan, they go on to establish that the men prefer to remain in the house of their birth after marriage. This indicates a decline in the system of matrilocal residence. However, in spite of the changes in the residence pattern, the matrilineal pattern in the Lalung family continues to be strong. The management of the family lies in the hands of the wife and she continues to be the real guardian of the children. As a part of their approach, they go on to compare this position with other matrilineal tribes of the North-Eastern region and bring out certain parallels.

Following the ethnographic pattern, Shyam Chaudhuri and Das examine the Lalung economic organisation in terms of their two distinctive eco-cultural features. Giving the details of their agricultural, fishing and historical activities they go on to observe that the rice is the only staple food that they eat throughout the year. They also go to examine the consumption and distribution pattern prevalent among the Lalungs and refer to the changes that have come about with the introduction of money in the economy.

When they examine the Lalung religion they find it linked with three broad heads agriculture, festal and eschatological and mortuary rites. In course of this description they bring out the influence of Assamese culture on the Lalung religion which mainly came through the preachings of the famous Medieval Assamese Saint, Sri Shankar Dev. The other tribe sections of the Nagas, the Cacharis, the Miris-like the Lalung, have also been influenced by the tenets of Sri Shankar Dev.

Thus this ethnographic description covers a wide canvas and in addition to describing the culture of the Lalung villages, it includes comparative information on other matrilineal tribes such as the Khasis and the Garos as well as the other tribes of North-Eastern India. With this

comparative approach based on rich ethnographic data, the authors present a model of Analytical Anthropology to describe a little-known tribe which needs to be emulated by other serious-minded Social Anthropologists.

Another full length monograph based on fieldwork also conducted earlier was published by C. von Furer-Haimendorf¹¹³ in 1969. Professor Haimendorf did his first spell of field researches among the Konyak Naga as early as in 1936. Again, he revisited the same area—a place 20 miles north of Tirap in 1962. In the light of these two field researches he describes the old pattern of Konyak life and the changes that have occurred in the life-style of people with the introduction specially of school education and medical services.

Following the traditional pattern Haimendorf describes the material culture of the Konyak tribe in terms of their dress, ornaments, the house, the weapons, the crafts etc. He finds them engaged in practising the slash and burn type of cultivation and describes the entire process of shifting cultivation.

While describing the social structure of the Konyak Nagas he finds the village as the longest corporate of the social unit. The villages are divided into several quarters or wards with its Morung. The smallest social unit is the household consisting usually of a single nuclear family but augmented occasionally by widowed parents of sisters of either spouse or by orphan children of a close kinsman.

The clan called as *Lee* is normally patrilineal, and exogamous descent groups and whoever lives in the *Great House* is regarded as the head of the clan and the owner of all houses founded by younger sons who had separated from the "Great House" Haimendorf goes on to describe the politics in the village and comments that in Konyak society, the Thenko class is democratic and the Thendu class is monarchic. These systems, though of contrasting types, co-exist in the Konyak society. He also describes the various phases of Konyak life including birth, premarital sexual relationship, pregnancy, marriage and death.

Describing the religious beliefs and practices Haimendorf finds them believing in 'spiritism' and making offerings regularly to appease them. The Konyak attitudes to the invisible seem to him basically pragmatic. He further observes that the Konyak view of the supernatural World resembles the religious ideas of most of the Tibeto-Burmese people of North-Eastern India in the sense that all of them see their environment as populated by innumerable spirits, partly friendly and partly hostile to man, but controllable by the performance of appropriate rites.

Some of the North-Eastern Himalayan tribes like the Lepchas, the Bhutias, the Rabhas and the Totos inhabit the extreme north-eastern region of Jalpaiguri in West Bengal bordering Bhutan. The Cultural Research Institute of Bengal, from time to time have published monographs¹¹⁴ on the tribes like the Lepchas (1962) and the Rabhas (1967) which have been discussed somewhere and they have also published a monograph on the Totos during recent years (1969). This brief monograph running into one hundred and twenty three pages is mainly a compilation of material on this tribe studied earlier by Sanyal,¹¹⁵ Chakravarty, Chattopadhyay¹¹⁶ and Roy Burman.¹¹⁷ This monograph brings together descriptive information on the historical, demographic, geographical, and linguistic settings of the village Totopara. It goes on to present some details regarding the domestic, economic, social and religious life of the Totopara villagers. Brief chapters are also included on disease and tribal welfare. The author of the book, A.K. Das,¹¹⁸ has tried to use the material of the different scholars cautiously and in

case of differences in their reporting, he has brought out the discrepancies. It is interesting to know as to how the three field workers (Sanyal, Chakravarty, and Roy Burman) give different spellings of the thirteen clans. Chakravarty, however, mentions fourteen clans.¹¹⁹ The monograph, though based on secondary sources brings out at one place the basic ethnographic details about the Totos and is a good handbook for the development officers, social workers and enlightened laymen who want to know about this little-known hill community.

“A Brief Historical Account of Nagaland”¹²⁰ by M. Alemchiba is an attempt to make a systematic record of the history of Nagaland. The Nagas having no written literature of their own and having no recorded accounts of their history, the project was quite difficult, but the author has used past publications mainly by administrators in British Government, and synthesized them into coherent whole. In Eight chapters, the author has described the origin and migration Naga relationship with the Ahoms, British occupation of Naga hills, annexation of more territory, British rule, period of transition, outbreak of hostility and the birth of a new state.

“The people of the Eastern Himalayas” by S.T. Das¹²¹ is a book devoted to the study of three ethnic groups—the Mikirs, the Dimasa Cacharis and the Zemi-Nagas, who are believed to be the earliest settlers of Assam and inhabit the Brahmaputra Valley, North Assam and South-East Assam. Divided into three parts—each for one group—the author has endeavoured to present in an uniform way the history, distribution and physical appearance; economic pursuits; religion; society and social structure; life cycle and beliefs; family, clan, kinship and inter-community relationships; dwelling, dress and food-habits; environmental sanitation and recreation; and language and literature. These people constitute a very important group of Indo-Mongoloids, and have a rich cultural legacy. They have a close and emotional relationship with environment, but many of those who lived in scattered hamlets along the foothills and Brahmaputra valley have now been mixed up with the neighbouring people.

“Khasi of Meghalaya: Study in Tribalism and Religion” by P.R.G. Mathur¹²² is a book on the interaction between traditional political system and religious forces on the one hand and recent changes among the Khasi on the other. Khasi, one of the most advanced, and one of the most important matriarchal tribes in India, has been studied in depth. In six chapters, Mathur has described the culture contacts, Muslim Khasi, the pattern of religion and the traditional political system, Khasi solidarity movements and religion, tribalism and nationalism. Author’s main concern has been the impact of western civilization, and the role of Christian missionaries. The Khasi economy is now diversified with substantial commerce, industry and urbanisation.

“The Noctes”,¹²³ a monograph by Parul Dutta is a comprehensive one dealing with the life and culture of the Noctes of Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh. This tribe, whose population was a little more than 20,000 in 1971 and distributed over fifty seven villages, inhabit the lower belt of the mountainous country. Ferocious head-hunters turned peace-loving Vaishnavites, the Noctes are now marching ahead along the path of progress. The language of this tribe falls within Tibeto-Burman group, though they have eight different dialects with few words in common. In the chapters entitled Domestic life, Social life, Political life, and Religion, the author has presented a comprehensive picture of their life and culture. the society is patriarchal and patrilineal. They have a strong institution of Chieftainship, which is a unique blend of democracy and dictatorship.

“Glimpses of Tribal Life in North-East India”, is a collection of papers by Dr. J.K. Bose¹²⁴ on the different aspects of life in Assam. “Dual organization in Assam”, “Triclan and Marriage

classes in Assam" Cross-cousin Marriage", "Levirate in Assam", "The Nokrom System of the Garos of Assam", and "The Garo Law of Inheritance" are the papers written in lucid style and full of factual data.

"Tripura: The land and its people", edited by J. Gan-Chaudhary¹²⁵ is a collection of eleven papers on different aspects of this state. Five of the papers have been written by the editor himself. The book covers history, administrative organisation, art and archaeology, land reforms, electoral system, folklore, local government political consciousness etc.

"Lower Siang People" by P.N. Lal and B.K. Das Gupta¹²⁶ is a book on the Gallong, the Miniyong and the Pasi people of the lower regions of the Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. The book has been divided into two parts wherein the authors have tried to determine whether a change in the ecology of an ethnic group leads to corresponding changes in their social, political, economic and religious life. It has been emphasised that although shifting cultivation is the predominant economy of the people, yet they are gradually taking to settled cultivation of paddy, which in turn is bringing about important changes in other aspects of their life.

"Culture change in tow Garo Villages" by D.N. Majumdar¹²⁷ is a study in culture change among the Garos of Assam. Based on field work in two villages, the author has described the land, the history, the old and new method of cultivation, the family and the household, property and inheritance, village administration etc.

PAPER AND NOTES

In addition to these major publications of the years under review, D.N. Majumdar has done considerable work specially among the Garos and the Rangdani Rabhas of the North-Eastern regions. As a regional Fellow of the Anthropological Survey of India, Majumdar¹²⁸ worked among the tribes of the Garo hills and published a number of papers in the Bulletin of the Anthropological Survey of India. In these papers Majumdar highlights the changing dimensions of social and religious life of the tribes of the Garo hills. While discussing the magico-religious rites of the Rangdani Rabhas he observes that they do not worship natural forces, such as thunder, rain or the Sun, though some of their deities are named after hills and streams. Each clan is also associated with a stream and a hill. When a member of that particular clan suffers from certain ailments, the clan god is to be propitiated.

On the basis of these and other materials, Majumdar comes to the conclusion that the Rangdani Rabhas still remain away from the orbit of traditional Hinduism. In this way they are different from certain other neighbouring tribes like the Kochs, the Dalus, the Hajongs and the Vaishnavite section of the Garos who have embraced many aspects of traditional Hinduism. The Rabhas however are distantly aligned with the Hindu caste of the neighbouring areas in so far as the abstinence from beef eating is concerned. this restriction they observe to the extent of not interdining with beef eating non-Hindu people such as the Muslims and the non-Vaishnavite Garos. Majumdar identifies them as a tribe which represent only "the first stage or the incipient stage of Sanskritisation, the stage at which they have aligned themselves with the Hindu castes but have yet to enter Hindu Society."¹²⁹

His next paper on the Rabhas is devoted mainly to the study of clan organisation.¹³⁰ He finds the clan organisation among the Rabhas associated with one function and that is of marriage regulations. In other aspects of their social organisation, the clans do not have any role to play. In

this respect the Rabhas stand on the same footing with the Kochs but they are very different from the Garos among whom clans are out and out social units which provide for all other aspects of Garo social organisation.

Writing about the religious practices among the Son Koch of Garo Hills,¹³¹ he classifies the three categories of supernatural beings accepted among the Son Koch: (1) deities adopted from the Hindu pantheon, and which are generally worshipped collectively for general well-being, (2) lesser supernatural beings capable of doing harm to individuals only and being worshipped by individuals and (3) clan deities worshipped by clan members only. He goes on to describe these deities in detail in terms of worship, taboos etc. In the light of the study of its religious beliefs, he comes to the conclusion that some aspects of traditional Hinduism have taken root in the religious beliefs of the Son Koch, the most striking being their taboos of pork, fowl meat and rice beer on certain occasions. Ceremonial cleanliness is also another aspect of Hinduism. The professional Brahmin priest has also come into picture as a ritual performer.

A broad based approach to understand the political and economic development has been made by A.P. Sinha who examines the development of tribal situations in the Hill Districts in the light of short-range history.¹³² Sinha after reviewing the developmental activities and administrative adjustments attempted in the hill districts of Assam refers to the causes of the neglect, suspicion and unhappiness of the hill-folk. Such situations that pervade the Hill districts of Assam, according to Sinha, are mainly because of the non-adjustment of the tradition-bound Hindu community of the plains with the rich traditions of democracy that each of the tribal cultures had.

A local political scientist, B. Pakem,¹³³ examines the cultural continuity and change in the Jaintia tribe of Assam and refers to similar relationships between the plainsmen and the hill tribes of Jaintia. Based on secondary sources and his brief field-work for two months in 1969, Pakem's work is an attempt to understand the political processes and the power structure in the Jaintia Hills and observes that the people's greatest need is participation in the Governmental activities. In the light of the genius of the people he recommends for them cultural autonomy which may enable them to take their own decision without much imposition from outside, and ends his paper by subscribing to the opinion expressed by the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes Commission, 1960 known as Dhebar Commission, which recommended integration of the tribals without imposition.

In the light of his long experience as an administrator in the NEFA region R.N. Haldipur¹³⁴ examines the task that the administrator has to perform in the process of integration of tribal culture with our national life. He exhorts the administrator to be careful and not made people consciously feel that he is an imposition and is depriving them of what they consider to be right and which he himself enjoys. He should not interfere with the process of growth but guide and lessen the conflict so that the people grow into maturity faster. He also makes a case for a single line administration with proper leadership as a homogeneous tribal community is devoid of compartmentalisation.

There are certain papers which refer to the varied consequences of Christianisation in the tribal areas of North-East India. S.M. Dubey,¹³⁵ a sociologist working in the Dibrugarh University made a study of one hundred and ten tribal students of Assam Medical College with a view to assessing their political awareness. He notes a positive correlation between conversion to Christianity, high percentage of literacy, social change and modernisation. In

general, he comes to the conclusion that though education is not the only variable it is all the same an important one for social change and political consciousness.

In another paper Tehuja¹³⁶ examines the impact of Christianity on the Nagas specially the Angami Nagas on the basis of her library work. She gives the origin and development of the Church among the Ao Nagas, examines the types of Christian activities in the Ao villages and then highlights the new trends of social and cultural life. Presenting as 'insider's' view she refers to a widening gap between the Naga mass and the 'main-stream of Indian life' for want of a responsible dialogue and of exchange of public views on the spot. She also refers to the inconsistencies or the paradox of generous Government grant to develop the Nagas on the one hand and the continued pressure of military operations on the other, which evidently create distrust and spirit of defeat and frustration in Naga society. She also refers to the immature understanding of the whole Naga complex while attacking the Christian church which has oriented the Nagas to a wider fellowship of humanity and to the treasures of modernity.

The paper by A.K. Sengupta¹³⁷ 'Lushai Kuki Clans-reexamined' throws light on the understanding of the confused picture of the complex ethnological setting of the tribes in Manipur. He makes an attempt to examine the nature of the different groups labelled as Lushai-Kuki clans, their inter-relationships in terms of distribution of power and the changes that are taking place in their homes alongwith the changed political situation of that area in recent days. He disagrees with the early labelling of the Kukis as clans by Shakespeare¹³⁸ and gives his arguments in support of its being termed a tribe instead of clan. He also expresses doubts in the use of the term Lushai by Shakespeare to include a great many clans.

Basing the findings in the light of his field researches in Manipur in 1963, Sengupta attempts to remove several confusions caused owing to the interplay of ethnographic, linguistic and political contracts and conquests caused in course of history. In his exploratory paper he makes a broad generalisation that the Lushais, the Kukis and the Chins found in Manipur are culturally allied groups and are branches of one main stock. Each branch is associated with a name, territorial or ethnic, and the same branch moving to a different area assume quite a different name.

In the light of new political developments there have been attempts from time to time to unify these different groups of tribes in this area other than the Nagas by several leaders of these groups, each under the common head Chin, Mizo, Kuki and the like, demanding a separate hill state. In forging such a political identity and making use of such terms for collective identification under one ethnic denomination, evidently they have been inspired by the Naga model. Along with this process there is also conflict and competition in the local power structure between the components of the above inclusive ethnic categories giving rise to a relationship of political subordination and super-ordination between them.

Sengupta, drawing heavily from Shakespeare, mentions the nature of absorption of "various clans" by the Lushai. He supports this contention in the light of his field researches and observes that the Lushai were the chiefs in all parts of the hill districts and under their influence several other tribes living in these districts such as, Hmar, Paite, Ralte, etc. were calling themselves Lushai after the name of their ruling tribe. He goes on to identify the origin of the term Kuki which used to be considered derogatory. Now it is a term for unifying all the Kuki-Chin groups under one head for demanding a sovereign Kuki-Chin land. The paper, thus, makes a valuable contribution to the understanding of the complex tribal situation in

Manipur by clarifying certain basic concepts about the social organisation of the non-Naga tribes living in Manipur as well as by referring to the recent political trends of regional unification without affecting much the internal cultural variations.

Another important paper on the current tribal situation in Manipur is written by Das¹³⁹ reference to which has been made earlier. Das took into consideration without going into historical complexity of both the Nagas and the Kukis, and refers to the replacement of the deep-seated localism, political loyalties by the Naga type of nationalism.

The Census operations have published an ethnographic note on the Dimasa Cacharis of Assam,¹⁴⁰ under the Ethnographic series. The volume includes material on the origin and history, population trends, physical characteristics, social organisation, economic life, religion, leisure and recreation etc. in thirty four pages. The monograph is based mainly on the earlier publications and there is little evidence of fieldwork. The report suggests that the Dimasa Cacharis have been influenced by the Assamese and Bengali neighbours living in the plains. It also deals with the continuation of the village councils under the traditional village headman, the *Gaonbura*. The *Gaonbura* elected by the village people distributes Jhum land and regulates the other activities of the village and represents the village on the District Council.

A few papers regarding land, agricultural and modern innovations of applied nature have also been published. K.L. Bhowmick and his team¹⁴¹ carried on investigations among the Zemi Nagas of the village Benreu in Kohima district of Nagaland. The two hundred and fourteen Zemi families living in the village practise terrace cultivation which has recently been introduced to the Zeliang-Kuki area from the neighbouring territory of the Angamis. This acceptance of terrace cultivation has brought about a number of changes in the social characteristics of the Zemi families. Bhowmick goes on to analyse the changes that occur in the social system owing to the acceptance of the new ideas.

Bhandari¹⁴² on the basis of his fieldwork among the Mishings of Assam during 1958-61 examines the economic activities of the Mishings as a part of a wider social system. The Mishings who earlier practised shifting cultivation have adopted permanent agriculture and have developed a system of land tenure. He gives the details about their agriculture pursuits, animal husbandry, fishing and labour organisation. The paper which gives factual information about the Mishing economy fails to link it or the land tenure with the social structure.

Srivastava¹⁴³ examines the problem of changes to be introduced in this area. He specially examines it in context with the introduction of education among the tribes of North-East India. He argues that the programmes of social change should be integrated and made comprehensive so as not to leave any aspect of their socio-cultural life unattended to. He comments that owing to the introduction of piece-meal programmes the desired results have not been felt.

'Anthropology and Archaeology, Essays in Commemoration of Verrier Elwin' edited by M.C. Pradhan et. al.¹⁴⁴ includes a few papers on tribal ethnography. One of the papers by Furer Haimendorf deals with the concept of morality and prestige among certain Naga tribes. He finds that the Nagas do make moral judgements in appreciating or condemning individual actions. They lack, however, the concept of universal moral principles applicable to mankind in general.

The study of the Phar tribe, which lives in the higher region of the Jaintia Hills was earlier attempted by A.P. Sinha¹⁴⁵ for his doctoral thesis from the Lucknow University. He particularly brought out the unique features of the social structure of a Phar village (Nortiang). His work was followed by that of Sukumar Banerjee¹⁴⁶ who carried out field investigations at Sangpur village which belongs to a different unit of Phar. In his paper Banerjee compares his field data with that of Sinha, and proposes a structural model for Phar society. He goes on to establish that the domestic unit occupies the base of the Phar structural model. These social units are formed by consanguinal members in which the position of elder sisters is equivalent to an incipient 'sympiah'. It assumes a dynamic aspect as soon as she sets up her separate establishment. Besides the domestic units, he refers to the matilineage and the village as the other units of authority structure.

Banerjee goes on to establish that the entire structural model exists on the performance of rituals at appropriate levels. In view of this, the attention of the Phars is always directed to these focal points which have to be guarded from the onslaught of external forces.

In a paper written by Srinivas and Sanwal¹⁴⁷ a similar approach to tribal problem of the North-Eastern region has been advocated. They examine the so-called tribal separatist tendencies in the context of the problem of national integration and advocate the need for a fresh view-point on the nature of minority-majority relationships to achieve real national integration. They propose a coordinated approach to the wide region which they conceptualise as NEHA (North-Eastern Hill Area). In order to achieve such a coordination at different levels, and between administrative development and welfare and academic agencies to have a single agency concerned with NEHA, they suggest having a single agency at the centre for looking into the problems of NEHA in all their ramifications, so that the multidimensional implications of any solution may be examined thoroughly before it is finally adopted.

During recent times, a Soviet ethnographer S.A. Maretina continued to publish research materials on the hill people of North-East India. Based on library researches, she has published six papers on the different aspects of the Ethnic History, Class formation, the Naga Sacred Stones, as well as on the ethnographic details of selected hill tribes of the North-Eastern region.

In her paper, the study of 'The social organisation of the hill peoples of North East India', published in Soviet Ethnography¹⁴⁸ she presents a historical review of the chief publications on the social structure of the hill tribes. In the course of the examination of relevant material published on the North-Eastern Hill tribes she goes on to emphasise the historical connections between the North-Eastern tribal region of India with those of Eastern and South Eastern Asia.

In another paper¹⁴⁹ Dr. Maretina traces the inter-relationships among natural environment, economy and society as found among Mattock husbandman. She traces the dislocations and changes that are caused in economy and then in social structure owing to certain transformations in ecological conditions. Tracing the increase in population she suggests as to how the threat of a land shortage begins to loom large and how the exploitation of forests is intensified in certain pockets of the North-Eastern region.

In another paper Maretina¹⁵⁰ presents a comprehensive Ethnic History of the hill peoples of North-Eastern India. Drawing materials from ancient Indian literature (Atharva Veda, the

Tantras and the Epics) and from the local legends she presents concrete data about the successive migrations of the tribes (the Mon-Khmers, the Tibeto-Burmese, migrants from the West etc.) and describes the processes of ethnic formations both in the hills and on the plains.

In yet another paper she¹⁵¹ traces the evolution of the formation of the social strata and classes among the people of South-Eastern Asia. Examining this process she observes that among some of the tribes of the Bodo group the class formation is as old as the beginning of the end millennium A.D. It was possible with the gradual transformation of the old clans into socially, privileged groups. This process progressed unevenly in different regions and in different periods. In some regions of North-Eastern India the equality in the community began to break down only towards the end of the 9th century A.D. In some cases without contact this process led to the elevation of the old clans to 'noble' clans and then to socially privileged group which ultimately led to the establishment of a class society. She also refers to the modern trends in class formation resulting into a greater unevenness of development. Many of the peoples that previously occupied a lower level from the point of view of social development began to develop faster leaving behind their neighbours. Such a levelling influence of the new economic factors removes the specific forms of social stratification and disintegration of the community.

In addition to writing these problems-oriented papers Maretina¹⁵² has also written Ethnographic papers giving ethnological details of tribes like the Angamis, Rengmas, Semas, Lhotas, Aos, Sangtums, Yachumis, Changs, Phoms, Kalyo-Kengyys, Kengyus, Konyaks.

In one more paper¹⁵³ she takes a completely different theme and presents a category of Naga sacred stones. These are: (1) the Fetishes (such as the Oha of the Ao Nagas), (2) the personified stones provided with human value (they marry, give birth, fight and so on), (3) the legendary stones and (4) the memorial stones. She also refers to the hypothesis of Furer-Haimendorf about the connections between the Naga menhirs and the mysterious monoliths of Dimapur.

A renowned journalist Mankekar¹⁵⁴ who stayed in the North-Eastern region in various capacities examines the complex problems of the tribals of the North-Eastern border and suggests that it needs to be studied methodologically and in depth through research in all its manifold aspects—historical, geographical, cultural, and even psychological, political and socio-economic. He also supports the need for forming a Regional Council on which would be represented all the States of the region and which should ultimately concern itself with internal security, planning, economic development, communications, coordination and certain other common subjects and services entrusted to the State Administration in the rest of the Indian Union. Mankekar on the pattern of the Peking Institute of Minorities, strongly recommends the establishment of a Himalayan Foundation dedicated to building up a body of knowledge and information on tribal affairs.

A few social workers who have stayed in the North-Eastern region in the capacity of representatives of certain voluntary organisation have also contributed to the understanding of tribal problems. Among them mention may be made of certain publications by M. Aram¹⁵⁵ who stayed among the Nagas on behalf of the Peace Centre. According to him the dominant aspect of the emerging Nagaland situation is characterised with "growing love for peace, growing consensus for political settlement, growing individualism and increasing social disparities." He advises: (1) to continue the peace policy, (2) to consider with sympathy the

suggestions and demands that may emerge from a consensus of Naga public opinion, (3) to adopt liberal policy of grants and subsidies for the development of Nagaland and (4) to replace the narrow Economic approach or Bureaucratic approach by a new enlightened policy of development.¹⁵⁶

Another social worker Natwar Thakkar¹⁵⁷ who stayed in a village in Nagaland as a prime mover of Gandhi Ashram makes a very informative study of the elections in Nagaland in 1969. He makes a comparative appraisal of the atmosphere prevailing in the State in 1954 and 1969. In these two elections there was enthusiastic polling all over the State which could be understood in the context of the Nagas' love for competition reflected in the spirit of villageism or *Khel* loyalties, clan loyalties and then party loyalties. His researches, thus bring to light as to how the voting behaviour in Naga society is governed by different values of life with which our acquaintance is not yet up to the mark. In addition, the atmosphere in the State is much vitiated by the existence of the secessionist activities conducted by the extremists. Thus, he has given very valuable advice to keep these cultural and historical factors into mind while implementing some of our national policies and programmes.

During the period under review considerable changes have taken place as well in the institutions meant for anthropological researches. The movements launched by the various minority and territorial groups ultimately led to their desired objectives. The Government of India granted Statehood to Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura and recently to Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. The Statehood to Nagaland was already granted on December 1, 1963 and more benefits were assured to them for achieving their political aspirations and economic development. Need was also felt for greater co-operation among themselves for the co-ordinated development of the whole region. In the light of this the North-East Council was constituted in November 1971, to provide necessary organisational set up for coordinated development of the region.

Among the institutions for research and publications, new Post-graduate departments of anthropology as well as of sociology were established in Dibrugarh and these two departments have initiated new projects of research especially in Arunachal Pradesh where they are located. The Department of Anthropology at Dibrugarh has in 1972 initiated publication of a bulletin which is likely to play a prominent role as a clearing house of publication of data on the tribals of Arunachal Pradesh.¹⁵⁸ The first issue includes papers on all branches of anthropology of Assam. In addition to papers mainly on physical anthropology, a few papers on family structures of an Ahan village (Baruah), on the marriage customs of the Assamese Hindu (Kar), on the impact of community development programmes, on the agricultural organisation of the Mikirs etc. have been included. It is hoped that the Bulletin will bring out more analytical and substantive papers on the region.

The old Department of Anthropology of Gauhati University which has recently intensified its research programmes has also come out with a Bulletin (1972). Its first volume¹⁵⁹ is also modelled after the Bulletin of the Dibrugarh University and lays more emphasis on the prehistoric culture and physical anthropological researches in Assam. There are some important papers relating to cultural anthropology as well. The Bulletin begins with a paper on Lalung society and discusses the economy of the Hill Lalungs, the mixed shifting and wet cultivation practised by the migrant Lalungs in the plains. Goswami in his paper examines the relevance of the bachelors' dormitory (*Samadhi*) in a jhuming economy and

among villages which combine shifting with wet cultivation. He refers to its absence in the peasant economy of the Lalungs of the plains. However, generalisations in this connection should not be made as in several plain-dwelling agricultural tribes in Middle India, the youth dormitories continue to be an effective village institution.

The paper by Majumdar on the comparative analysis of the Boro and Koch Kinship terminologies also deserves mention. Majumdar examines how far differences in the sociological factor manifest in the kinship terminologies. The Koch have matrilineal descent groups while the Boros have no such groups and their society is rather patrilineally based. Majumdar often making careful comparisons and diagrammatic representations suggests that a co-relation can be drawn between sociological phenomena and kinship terminologies, so far as these two tribes are concerned.

There is another interesting paper which describes the indigenous marketing organisation of the fishing folk of Thanga, a lake-dwelling community of Manipur. Goswami and Budhi Singh in this paper bring out the pivotal role played by the money-lending patrons and patronesses in the overall fishing economy of the Thanga. They suggest that the patron-client relationship is governed by socio-cultural and economic factors and the keen competition of middle-men and middle-women.

The Bulletin published under the editorship of a senior anthropologist of the country who has done considerable work in the field of social and cultural anthropology, material culture, and archaeology is likely to help us in understanding the up-to-date tribal situation in North-East India.

Another magazine of a popular nature, specialising in the trends and events in Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Arunachal, Mizoram, Sikkim and Bhutan, under the title, 'North Eastern Affairs', has started publication in 1973. This paper though edited by a journalist Mrs. S. Sarin¹⁶⁰ has the support of social scientists, historians, administrators and other specialists on the affairs of the North-Eastern region. The first volume brings new facts about the little known Chakma tribe who originally inhabited the Chittagong hill tracts and which migrated from Assam. It also includes an informative paper written by Pakem, a native Professor of Political Science on the Underground Nagas, and by an historian P.C. Kar 'On merging Pattern of administration in the Garo hills. 'The North-Eastern Affairs', continues its publication and has evidently gone a long way in acquainting us with an up-to-date picture of North-Eastern India from different angles and approaches.

Tribal research in the North-Eastern region of the Himalayas during recent years continued to be of unusual concern, specially because of the political instability and rebellious mood of the tribals. The ethnographic trends are reflected in several types of publications such as: (1) 'The Riangs and The Lalungs' by the Anthropological Survey of India, 'The Konyak Nagas' by Furer Haimendorf, 'The Totos' by the Cultural Research Institute of West Bengal and Area-based Ethnographic Report of the Census Operation, (2) papers by anthropologists as well as by political scientists, sociologists and other social scientists, and (3) Publication of the Bulletin of the Departments of Anthropology from Gauhati (1972) and Dibrugarh (1972) as well as of the popular magazine entitled North-Eastern Affairs (1973), all of which have been discussed in the foregoing paragraphs.

We have, thus, come to the end of our review of the studies on the North-Eastern region. To sum up some of the important points are highlighted here.

In the course of this review exclusive emphasis has been paid on the **ethnographic** studies of the tribes of the North-Eastern region. A critical evaluation of the literature, however, makes it quite clear that along with the **ethnographic** inquiries most of the scholars also undertook anthropometric surveys among the respective tribes and discussed their ethnic and linguistic identities. They also attempted to trace the cultural history of the tribes in terms of archaeological, ethnographic, and linguistic evidences. Most of the scholars also collected the **myths and folklore of the respective tribes**. Taken as a whole most of the scholars who worked in the North-East region especially during the early periods attempted to present all types of anthropological material that they could manage to collect in course of their field inquiries. Some of them took the help of experts for collecting specialised data and thus enable them to present a total picture of the tribes.

This revival also brings out the various phases in the development of the study of tribal culture of North-East India. It becomes evident that the colourful tribes having peculiar customs and practices attracted the foreign administrators, anthropologists, missionaries, military officers, travellers, and social workers who evinced keen interest in knowing more and more about these communities. Their first elementary attempt was reflected in writing note on the tribal culture. This further expanded into writing Regional Handbooks and District Gazetteers mainly based on Census information supplementd by their fieldwork specially during the period of Census operations. The administrative and colonial needs for more and more detailed information about each tribe was considered essential and it was in this region that, for the first time, a Superintendent of Ethnography was appointed and in course of a period of about thirty years i.e. between 1906 and 1937, a series of sixteen monographs and a number of other types of work saw the light of day. This cumulative effort strengthened the tools of administration in this area and the entire wild land and people were brought under administrative control of some type or the other. This reflects the importance of anthropological enquiry for the Colonial Administration, which evidently was adequately realised in the North-Eastern region.

The researches in the North-Eastern region also brought to light the co-operation between the administrators and anthropologists to ensure effective administration based on scientific knowledge of the land and the people. In the changed situation in India, when we are confronted with the task of national reconstruction, such co-operation is very much needed among the administrators and social scientists.

With the establishment of the Shillong branch of the Anthropological Survey of India, the Department of Anthropology of Guwahati, NEHU and Dibrugarh Universities and of a few other foreign and Indian scholars, the anthropological researches in the North-Eastern region have attained a certain level through specialised institutional efforts. Some of their researches are of an analytical nature. While on the one hand scholars like T.C. Das,¹⁶¹ Haimendorf,¹⁶² Elwin,¹⁶³ M.C. Goswami,¹⁶⁴ Bhabanand Mukherjee,¹⁶⁵ Burling,¹⁶⁶ Majumdar, Bhagbati, B.M. Das and a few others have undertaken analytical researches and have effected refinement in their methods and substantive presentation, on the other hand, the NEFA Administration has published a number of short and descriptive monographs which are hardly of much anthropological use from the analytical point of view. Again one comes across a few publications even by scholars like Haimendorf who prefer to write in the style of a traveller. It seems that the various phases in the development of tribal ethnography co-exist in the North-Eastern region. To my mind such trends are neither contradictory nor unhealthy,

but it is rather necessary on the one hand to fill in the gaps in the basic **ethnography** of this region and especially of NEFA and such other interior regions and on the other hand time should not be lost for making more sophisticated researches in the fascinating **social science** situations which abound in the North-Eastern region.

The problem of anthropological research in this area need not be taken into consideration at par with other tribal areas in view of its geo-political significance. As this area is the meeting place of international borders of China, Bangladesh and Burma, the tribals are exposed literally to the world outside and are influenced in their attitudes and strategies by factors beyond the control of the Local and National Governments. In other words the tribes of this region pose problems and questions which are not only related to social welfare but also to national security. In view of these special considerations, there is need for comprehensive, problem-oriented and systematic anthropological studies of this area. The various local institutions like the Shillong branch of the Anthropological Survey of India, the Research Division of the Arunachal Administration, the Tribal Research Institute of Assam and the three University Departments of Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Shillong should co-ordinate the resources and efforts in the study of this region. As the situation exists today, these institutions function in isolation as there is hardly any co-operation among them. With the establishment of the branches of Indian Council of Social Science Research at Shillong the ground is prepared for integrating these local and regional organisations and it is hoped that it will not fail to create an atmosphere of co-operation and collaboration in this country especially to avoid overlappings in research and to improve its quality.

Chapter II

Land and People

North-Eastern India has a unique geographical situation. Flanked by hills on both the sides, the mighty Brahmaputra flows from the eastern corner to the western corner. The western side of this region is open to the eastern part of Indian subcontinent. The region includes the states of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.

Popularly termed as the seven sisters of the North-Eastern region, they constitute a homogeneous natural region of the hills, valleys, plains and other related geographical features. Though the North-East region reflects certain significant ecological and cultural adaptive contrasts between the hills and the plains regions, there are also significant elements of continuity in the biological, cultural and social factors between the hills and the plains. Again available ancient, mediaeval and modern records indicate inter-dependence and interactions between the hills and the plains in the North-East. In this chapter the geographical characteristics of the North East as reflected within the seven States will be described. The chapter will also bring out the ecological adaptation of the various ethnic groups inhabiting the hills and plains of the North East.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

In this geographical region, the present Arunachal Pradesh earlier known as the North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) has undergone several political changes. It is of considerable geo-political importance. On the one hand, the high mountain ranges, difficult terrains, formidable streams and thick forests made it an isolated region, and on the other, it provides the international boundary for several neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar. The mountain passes and the river courses again, provide migration routes while the great mountain ranges and difficult streams, discourage the people to have contact with one another. Lastly, the Brahmaputra river forms a cultural watershed by barring the people of Arunachal Pradesh from having contact with the people of Assam.

The Arunachal Pradesh cover some 83,743 sq. kms. of area bounded by Myanmar in the East, Tibet in the North East, Assam in the South and Bhutan in the West. The rest of the great Himalayan range forms the northern and north-eastern boundary with Tibet. The altitude of these mountain ranges sometimes vary from as high as 21,000 ft. to sometimes as low as 9,000 ft. Towards the Myanmar border the mountains gradually descend and in the Patkoi hills, the average altitude is about 6,000 ft. The extension of foothill strips is constituted by the mountainous belt comprising the spurs radiating southward from the Himalayan crestline. The pattern is a little varied in Western Arunachal Pradesh where regions like Thang, Bomdi La etc. run parallel to the great Himalayan ranges.

The major important rivers of Arunachal Pradesh are the Tirap, the Lohit, the Dhang or Siang, the Subansiri and the Kameng. The five districts are all named after the major rivers

flowing through the respective districts. The Lohit river which rises above the *Zayul* area or Tibet cuts across the Himalayan Crestline near Rimea. The Dhang river is the Southward continuation of the Tsangpo which enter into Indian territory near Gelling in the Siang district and is known as the Siang in the lower hills. The Subansiri rises in Tibet and after crossing the Himalayan Crestline it travels through the district and ultimately joins with the Brahmaputra river. The Kameng river runs generally from the north to south and after a number of sharp right angle turns in its lower reaches it joins the Brahmaputra in Assam.

According to 1981 census the population of Arunachal Pradesh was 6,31,839. The communities of Arunachal Pradesh can be classified under three broad categories of the Kameng, the Subansiri and Siang districts.

The Kameng district is predominantly inhabited by tribes like the Monpa, Sherdukpen and Aka. Among the Monpas local residence marriage with service is still traceable. The Sherdukpen society is characterised with the presence of a system of social stratification. They have become Buddhists though traces of spirit worship are quite prevalent. The Aka have a democratic system of village organisation where issues concerning the village are decided by the village elders. The Aka have also an inter-village organisation of regional nature. Their supreme God is *Teharo* and they worship elemental forces like wind, rain etc.

The Subansiri district has predominant population of the Nishi (the Daflas), the Apa Tani, the Tagin, and the Hill Miri. These tribes are organised on a patrilineal basis though there are certain unique features among themselves. Like the Akas, slaves are also found among Nishis. The supreme deity of the Nishis is *Ane Duini* (the Sun Goddess) and their religion revolves round the worship of *vi* (spirits) and *Orum* (ghosts) which may cause harm to human beings. The Apa Tanis are characterised, unlike other tribes of the region, with a strong village organisation and the five villages round the district headquarters township of Zero reflect a strong sense of unity and participate in the same Apa Tani festivals. In material culture the Hill Miri, resemble the Nishis. Unlike the Apa Tanis the Hill Miris have very small villages, and among the households of the village there is no strong unified bond.

The Siang district is characterised by a group of tribes which is now known as the Adi. At present the term Adi includes communities namely the Pailibo, the Gallong, the Ashing, the Minyong and the Padam. These communities are characterised by a similar culture. There are, however, some dialectic differences among them. The Adi communities are characterised with the worship of Supreme deities called '*Moship*' which are symbolised by the sun and the moon.

The Lohit district has, again, a cluster of small communities which are collectively known as the 'Mishmis'. These communities the Idu, the Taram and the 'Kaman' or the 'Miju' are spread all over the Sino-Burma and Indo-Tibetans border areas of the Lohit district. In addition to the Mishmi, the Khampti represent the Shan culture of upper Burma. The Khamptis have a system of slavery but their society is not stratified. They are followers of Hinayana Buddhism and have been greatly influenced by the Buddhist *Vihara* and its *Bhikshus* are found in each village. The Singphos share many things in common with the Khamptis and they have also migrated recently from upper Burma. They are also Buddhists like the Khamptis but the elements of spirit worship are also present.

The Tirap district is mainly dominated by the Tangsa, the Nocte and the Wancho. The Tangsas are also migrants from Myanmar. Their traditional village institutions like the youth

dormitories and the village councils have considerably declined. They, however, preserve the institution of girl's dormitories. The Nocte have a distinctly hierarchical society of which the princely families occupy the topmost position followed in turn by the middle class and the commoners. They retain both the boys and girls dormitories. In addition to their spirit worship they have also been converted to Vaishnavism. The Wanchu, however, practice the traditional religion and were formerly known to be headhunters.

In terms of culture contact the communities of Arunachal Pradesh can be again classified under three broad categories: Firstly, Communities which form part of large cultural tradition. While the Sherdukpens, the Monpas and the Khampas of the Kameng district are largely an integral part of the Tibetan Buddhist cultural tradition, the Khamptis and the Singhpos of the Lohit district are parts of the Burmese Buddhist cultural tradition. Secondly, Communities of the southern-most annexations of Arunachal Pradesh (i.e. Tirap district) show the clear impact of neighbouring cultures. The Noctes, the Wanchos and the Tangsas come under this category. The Noctes show the impact of Assamese Vaishnavism and the latter two communities have been very much influenced by the Burmese culture. Finally, all other tribal communities of Arunachal Pradesh besides those mentioned in the first and second categories have close cultural and linguistic affinities among themselves.

ASSAM

The Greater Assam which used to be the land of the tribals has now been reduced to a non-tribal state of valley of the rivers Brahmaputra and Barak. The only hilly districts are in the North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong which are administered under the VI Schedule of the Constitution of India.

Assam has an area of 78,400 sq. kms. and population of the state in 1981 was 1,98,96,843.

Formerly known as Mikirs, the Karbis are the major tribal community of the Karbi Anglong. As they live on the slopes of undulating hills, they are locally known as Anglong slope-dwellers. The Karbi is collective name for four endogamous groups. They are Chaintang, Ronghang, Amri and Dumrali. These groups are patrilineal and have essentially the nuclear family system.

North Cachar Hill District is inhabited by the Dimasa. They are the only Bodo speaking people living away from the plains of the Brahmaputra valley.

It has been reported that both the patrilineal and matrilineal clans co-exist. The inheritance of property is also along the male and female lines respectively (Majumdar, D.N. : 1980).

In addition to these hilly districts, the Bodo speaking tribes are preponderant in the Brahmaputra valley from the extreme eastern to the western corner. They are mixed with the non-tribals and as there is little difference from others, they claim themselves to be Hindus. Some of them have been completely assimilated within the Hindu caste hierarchy and are quite indistinguishable from the Assamese peasants.

The Bodo speaking people who inhabit the areas are: (1) the Boros and the Boro Cacharis of Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang district, (2) the Rabhas of Goalpara, Kamrup district, (3) the Lalungs of the Nowgong and Karbi Anglong district, (4) the Sonowal Cacharis of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh and (5) the Chutiyas of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh districts.

The other tribe of Assam are the Mishing who were originally termed as Miri. They have traditional affiliation with the Hill Miris. These groups are also sanskritised and have embraced a type of Assamese Vaishnavism.

In addition some of the hill tribes like the Garos have also settled down in the valleys and undulating plains and have been practising settled agriculture. Though they retain many of their traditional institutions, they have been considerably assimilated with the dominant culture of the region.

MANIPUR

Manipur, the land of Jewels, and the 'Switzerland of India' described by Lord Irwin is split up into two regions—the Hills and the Plains. Manipur comprises an area of 22,327 sq. kms. of which 20,126 kms form the hill areas. In 1981 the population of the state was 14,20,953. The inhabitants of the hills are about 29 colourful tribes and have their respective dialects, customs, practices and modes of dress. Most of them are Christian. The Meiteis inhabiting the plains are mostly Hindus and speak Manipuri a highly developed language with a rich and ancient literature of its own.

Manipur is the twentieth State of the Indian Union. The small plain area comprising about 2,230 sq. km. is surrounded by hills on all sides. Manipur is bounded on the north by Nagaland, on the south by Mizoram, on the east by Myanmar and on the west by the Cachar District of Assam.

The communities living on the hills have been least studied. Majumdar (1980: 36-40) has classified them in terms of their linguistic affiliation as well as geographical locations. According to him they may be classified into three linguistic groups—(1) Naga-Bodo group of the Manipur north district, (2) Eastern Naga group of the Manipur north district as well as the Manipur east district and (3) Kuki-Chin group of the Manipur south district and Tengnopal district.

The tribals who inhabit this state, and about whom some literature is available are the Puram, the Tangkhul, the Sanamahi, the Paite, the Baite or the Thadou, the Mao-Maram, The Chiru, the Vaiphei, the Hmar, the Kom, the Maring and the Monsang.

The most researched tribe is the Puram on which a full length monograph is available (Das, T.C.: 1945). They are a patrilineal tribe and have a complicated marriage and kinship systems. They have undergone considerable change and they prefer to be called in Chote. The latest researches have shown that they have completely forgotten their indigenous original name of the group.

The Tangkhul are the biggest group of the area and according to the 1971 Census account for 17.30 per cent of the total tribal population of Manipur. The Tangkhul were first to embrace Christianity in Manipur and currently most of them have become Christians. The other tribes also are patrilineal and share similar ecology and economy with other tribes.

Jhum cultivation is still practised in the hills of Manipur. The new practice of terrace cultivation is also progressing. They are complacent with the old method of cultivation. Since the villagers are from hand to mouth, a new method of cultivation could mean an uncertain future. In view of this, they do not want to part with their energy, labour and cash for the new venture.

MEGHALAYA

Meghalaya having an area of 22,429 sq. kms. and population 13,35,819 has been characterised with the Garo and Khasi hills from which the two matrilineal tribes—the Garo and the Khasi—derive their names. The two districts of western Meghalaya are Garo Hills East and Garo Hills West. These districts are inhabited by the major tribe: the Garos (population 2,39,747). The other tribes inhabiting the western Meghalaya are the Hajong (21,597), the Rabha (10,133) the Koch (6,684), the Boro (1,320) and the Dalu (population figures not available).

The Garos being numerically the pre-dominant tribe, inhabit all parts of Garo hills and the neighbouring plains while the other tribal communities inhabit only the margins of the Hills and the plains. The Garos also inhabit their adjoining areas of the Khasi hills district of Meghalaya, and the Goalpara and Kamrup districts of Assam. Pockets of Garo population are also there in Bangladesh, north Bengal and in almost all the districts of Assam. The Hajong and the Koch are also found in both Meghalaya and Bangladesh. The Rabhas are widely spread tribes found in the western Meghalaya, the southern parts of the Goalpara and Kamrup districts of Assam as well as in north Bengal. The Dalus were mainly inhabitants of the erstwhile East Pakistan but after the emergence of Bangladesh some have migrated to the Garo hills. In addition, the Garo hills provide shelter to the Muslim population which evidently have migrated from the neighbouring areas of Assam and Bangladesh.

Playfair (1909) and recently Majumdar (1972) have written exhaustively about the Garo society and culture. The Garos are well known for practising matriliney which implies tracing of descent through the females and transmission of property from one generation to the next in the female line. The society, however, is not characterised with female dominance in any sphere of life. Garo females are very much dominated by males probably more so than societies having distinct patrilineal features (Majumdar 1980: p. 43)

The social structure of the Garos can be understood only in context with *nok* which literally means a house, hence it implies a family or household. The basic element of the *nok* is a woman around which the entire organisation revolves. As regards the other plain-dwelling communities—Hajong, Rabha, Koch, Boro, Dalu—they are dependent on plough cultivation and their life style is modelled after that of the peasantry of the Brahmaputra valleys and Bangladesh. In matters of social organisation they have changed considerably though distinct traces of a matrilineal society are yet available from which one can infer that not long ago the matrilineal system was in full vigour among these communities. All these communities claim to be Hindus and they do not eat beef, though in matters of detail they differ from each other. These communities though, in general, have abandoned the Jhum or shifting cultivation, reflect certain type of continuum from the shifting cultivating Garos dwelling in the hills.

The eastern part of Meghalaya is characterised by the Khasi and Jaintia Hills which now constitute the two administrative districts of Khasi and Jaintia. These districts are inhabited by the Khasi and the Jaintia tribe which now claim separate ethno-cultural identities. The Khasi and the Jaintia are the only *Austro-Asiatic* speaking group in the North-Eastern India. They are also unique in terms of possessing a perfect matrilineal organisation. The Khasis and the Jaintias have strictly exogamous matrilineal clans, which they call *Kur* or *Jaid*. They follow strictly the system of matrilocal residence and the youngest daughter of the family locally termed as *Ka Khadduh* inherits all the household property and she is regarded as the custodian of the family

property. The role of the maternal uncle, however, in matters of property is quite dominant. The majority of the Khasis have embraced Christianity. In case of the Jaintias though their kings accepted Hinduism in the 16th century but today 63 per cent of the Khasis and Jaintias have accepted Christianity.

MIZORAM

Mizoram or the land of the Mizos had population 4,93,757 in 1981 and is a new name of the hilly areas formerly known as Lushai hills district. It was under the Act of Parliament that the name of Lushai hills district was changed to Mizo district from 29th April 1959. This district became a Union Territory from 21st January, 1972 and attained statehood on 20th February, 1987.

Mizoram forms a Cashew nut-like area in the North-Eastern corner of India and is sandwiched between Myanmar in the east and south and Bangladesh in the west. On the north are the Cachar district of Assam and Manipur while on the North-West lies Tripura.

This state with an area of 21,081 sq. kms. is of considerable geo-political significance as it has approximately 1,014 kms. of international boundaries with Myanmar and Bangladesh. The steep and rugged hill ranges run from north with an average height of about 900 meters. The highest peak is Phawngpuri or blue mountain with an altitude of 2,065 kms. The two main rivers are Tlawng (Dhaleswari) in the north and Kolodyne (Chhintuipui) with their tributaries which become turbulent during the rainy season.

Geologically, like other parts of North-Eastern region, the hills in Mizoram are of soft sand stones and shales. Owing to this geological composition there are frequent and heavy landslides during the rainy season. The climate of the territories is temperate with pleasant summers and not very cold winters. The summer temperature varies between 20 and 29 degree centigrade while in winter it varies between 11 and 21 degree centigrade. The entire territory receives rain from the monsoon, the average being 208 centimeters in Aizawl, the capital. The Mizo is a generic term and it stands for several major tribes and sub-tribes of the area. The Major tribes are the Lushai, the Ralte, the Hmar, the Paite and the Pawl.

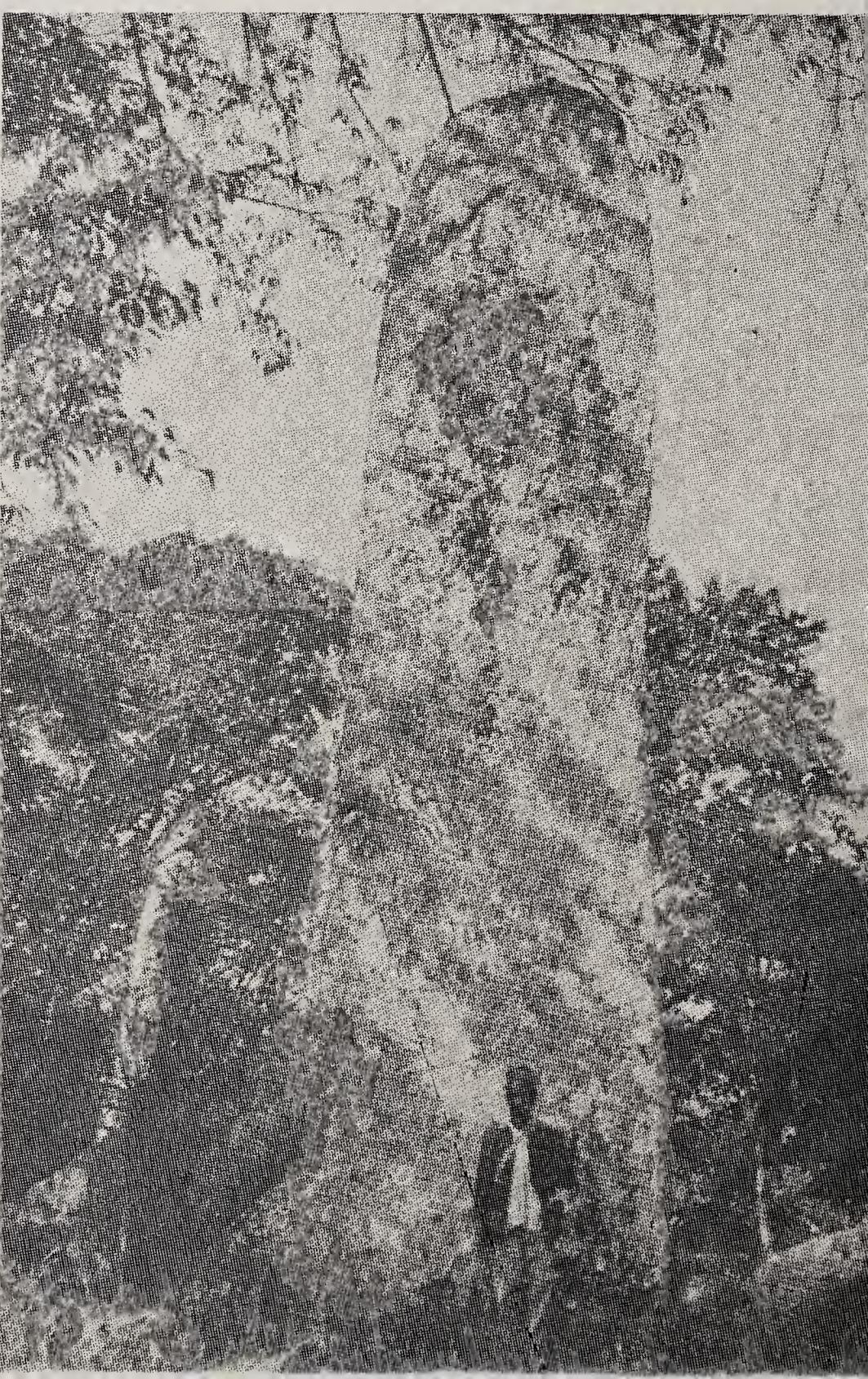
Besides the Mizos, Mizoram is also inhabited by a number of smaller communities culturally very much akin to the Mizo. They are Thode, Kukis, Lakhers. There are eleven sub-tribes, which are collectively termed as Abzia. They are Chawngthu, Chawhto, Nagente, Khawlting, Khaingte, Pautu, Rawite, Renthlet Tlau, Vangchhia and Zawngte.

In Mizoram the Chakmas are a distinct tribe. They are Buddhists and originally were inhabitants of the Chittagong hills of Bangladesh. But after communal trouble in that country they entered Mizoram and large sections of them were settled in Mizoram itself. Some sections of them were sent to Arunachal Pradesh and to the Nowgong district of Assam for rehabilitation. A few scholars like Shakespeare (1912), Parry (1928), Mc Call (1949), Thanga (1978) and Goswami (1980) have written about the different aspects of the Mizos in detail. The Mizos practise tribal endogamy but now a days, marriage with other groups are also practised. However, there is no clan exogamy. Christianity is the dominant religion of the territory (87 per cent) while Buddhism stands next to it. The percentage of literacy comes to 54 per cent.



THE PRIMORDIAL FAMILY : *Mizo Mother and Child*

BRIDGING THE GAP:
A suspension Bridge on Thlawng River. Mizoram



MAN IS DWARF INDEED:
Nartiang Monolith Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya





HERE LIVES THE SAMARITAN : A typical Mizo house



*HOMING IN :
A Nocte house*



FUTURE IS FAR AWAY
Khasi boys

WHO SAYS I AM NAKED?
A youth in festival dress



*GATHERING THE FRUITS OF LABOUR :
Abor women going to field*



*POUNDING THE PAST :
Khasi boys using mortar*



BURDENS OF LIVING
Garo carrying Oranges

WORK IS LIFE : Garo women going to field



*DANCING THE LIFE OUT :
Lalung Spring festival dance*



*DRINK AND BE DAMNED :
Lalungs drinking during spring festival*



*WAITING FOR.....WHAT ?
A Gallong Couple*



*WASHING THE DIRT AWAY:
Padam children taking bath*

NAGALAND

Nagaland, as the sixteenth State of the Indian Union was inaugurated on the 1st December, 1963. It is one of the smallest States of India and is located on the Eastern frontier of the country. It lies between $25^{\circ}6'$ and $27^{\circ}4'$ North latitudes and between $93^{\circ}20'$ and $95^{\circ}15'$ East longitudes. It is bounded by Assam on the west and north, by Arunachal Pradesh in the north and east, by Myanmar in the east, and Manipur in the south.

Most of the State is hilly and forested except for the area near Dimapur and a few other small areas near the border of Assam. Major part of the state is constituted by three parallel mountain ranges—Patkai, Naga and Barail running north-east to south-west. The Patkai range lies on the east and forms the Myanmar border. The State has a very rugged topography with wide spurs and ridges. The altitude of the state varies between 198 metres (636 ft.) to 3,048 metres (10,000 ft.). The highest peak is Saramati (3,840 metres i.e. 12,598 ft.) in the Patkai Range in the Tuensang district followed by Japvo (9,800 ft.) near Kohima in the Barail range.

Nagaland covers an area of 16,579 sq. km. with a total population of 7,74,930 (1981 Census). The average density of population is about 47 per sq. km. as compared to 216 per sq. km for the rest of India.

The climate varies from the sub-tropical to temperate. The average winter temperature goes down as low as 30°F . The soil is acidic and rich in organic matter but poor in phosphate and potash content.

The population of the Naga tribes and sub-tribes with their distinctive languages and cultural features are concentrated in the seven districts of Nagaland. The district Kohima is the home of the Angami, the Zeliang, the Rangma and a small group of Kuki and a few other minor tribes. The district of Phek is inhabited by the Chakhesang and Pocharris and a group of Sangtams.

Wokha district is the land of the Lothas and Zunheboto is the home of the Sema while Mokokchung district is inhabited by the Ao. Of the other two districts Tuensang is the home of the Changs and the Sangtams, some Semas and a few other minor tribes and the Mon district is inhabited by Konyaks.

The Nagas inhabit one thousand one hundred twelve villages of the state which are located at the height between 1,000 to 2,000 metres. The capital town of Nagaland, Kohima, is located at a height of 1,463 metres (4,800 ft. above sea level). According to the 1981 Census, the population of the state is 7,74,930 persons in an area of 16,579 sq. km., the density being only 47 per sq. km.

Different kinds of trees, plants, herbs abound in Nagaland which are used for timber, fuel as well as for medicinal purposes. Indigenous tea grows all over the State. The forest are also rich in wild life including elephant, rhinoceros, python, bison, tiger, leopard, bear etc. There are different kinds of birds which are almost common to all the Himalayan regions, Myanmar and China.

TRIPURA

The modern state of Tripura lies to the south-west of Assam, and to the east of Bangladesh. It is located between the Parallels of $23^{\circ}56'$ and $24^{\circ}32'$ north latitudes and between $91^{\circ}10'$ and $92^{\circ}21'$ east longitudes. The state covers an area of 10,477 sq. km. and the shape of the territory is

irregular. In 1981 the population of Tripura was 20,53,058. It is a curved strip of land, measuring about 183.5 km in length from north-east to west and 112.7 km. in width from south to north.

Tripura is a land-locked state and its geographical limits touch both national and international boundaries. Four-fifth of its borders are enclosed by the Bangladesh districts of Sylhet in the north, Comilla in the west, Noakhali and Chittagong in the south and the hill tracts of Chittagong in the south-east. It is only in its north-eastern border that Tripura meets the state of Assam and Mizoram.

The climate of Tripura is almost similar to that of the other states in North-Eastern India and Bangladesh. It is neither too hot nor too cold. The average maximum temperature is 35°C in May and June and the average minimum is about 10°C in December and January.

Situated within the monsoon zone of the Bay of Bengal in the south the territory receives an annual heavy rainfall of more than 400 cm. On account of the excessive humidity, malaria, blood-fever, bowel complaints, dysentery and cholera were very common diseases till recently.

Geologically the territory is not very old. It seems to have risen from the sea bed in the late Tertiary age about forty million years ago. The land surface is mountainous and uneven. The whole terrain abounds in rivulets, brooks, rivers, hills; plains, valleys and lakes. The rivers in this territory are Gomati, Haora, Longii, Juri Deo, Manu, Dhali, Khowai, Muhuri and Feni. All these rivers traverse Bangladesh before they fall into the Bay of Bengal. The steep descent, the zigzag course, the narrow breadth and shallow surface of the rivers combined with heavy rainfall and the loose structure of the soil cause tremendous soil erosion and frequent floods. There are seven bay ranges and numerous hillocks in Tripura. Of the hills, the highest are the Jampai (3,200 ft.) and the Sakhantary (2,578 ft.) respectively.

The flora and fauna of Tripura is similar to that of the neighbouring states of the North-East and Bangladesh. The greater part of Tripura was densely covered with primeval forests even upto the middle of this century. The various kinds of available flora are grass, creeper, cane bamboo tree and wild herbs. The common forest trees among several are: *Chattim* (*Alstonia scholaris*), *Chamal* (*Artocarpus ohaplaza*), *Hargaja* (*Dillenia pentagyna*) the *Garjam* (*Dipterocarpus turbinatus*) etc. There is also a large variety of flower, fruit and medicinal plants. In view of the abundance of all these Tripura has been termed as a 'herbarium'. One tribal medicine man has rightly remarked that he finds no place to set his foot without treading over a medicinal herb.

The fauna of Tripura, like its flora, resemble those in the neighbouring states. The terrestrial fauna are more than the aquatic fauna. Tripura is poor in piscean fauna. It is partly dependent on Bangladesh for the supply of fish.

Chapter III

Demography

The tribal population constitutes 7.85 per cent of the total population of India. The 49.76 per cent of the tribes inhabit the Middle Indian Region, followed by 11.69 per cent in Western India, 11.69 per cent in the Himalayan Region, and 10.74 per cent in South India. The share of tribal population is only 0.11 per cent in the Island Region of India.

According to the 1981 Census the distribution of tribal population in the five regions is given in table 1.

Table 1
The Tribal Population in the Five Regions 1981*

Region	Tribal population w.r.t. total in State population of the State	Per cent w.r.t. Tribal India	
1	2	3	4
Himalayan Region			
(i) North-Eastern Himalayan Region			
1. Assam**	2,186,663	10.99	
2. Meghalaya	1,076,345	80.58	
3. Arunachal Pradesh	441,167	69.82	
4. Nagaland	650,885	83.99	
5. Manipur	387,977	27.30	
6. Mizoram	461,907	93.55	
7. Tripura	583,920	28.44	
(ii) Central Himalayan Region			
8. Uttar Pradesh	232,705	0.21	
(iii) North-Western Himalayan Region			
9. Himachal Pradesh	197,263	4.61	
(iv) Eastern Himalayan Region			
10. Sikkim	73,623	23.27	
Total	6,292,455	5.64	11.69

** Projected figures; no census was held in Assam owing to the disturbed conditions prevailing there.

1	2	3	4
Middle India Region			
11. Bihar	58,10,867	8.31	
12. West Bengal	3,070,672	5.63	
13. Orissa	59,15,067	22.43	
14. Madhya Pradesh	11,987,031	22.97	
Total	2,67,83,637	13.18	49.76
Western India Region			
15. Rajasthan	4,183,124	12.21	
16. Maharashtra	5,772,038	9.19	
17. Gujarat	4,848,586	14.22	
18. Goa	10,721	0.99	
19. Dadra & Nagar Haveli	81,714	78.82	
Total	1,48,96,183	11.26	27.68
South India Region			
20. Karnataka	1,825,203	4.91	
21. Andhra Pradesh	3,176,001	5.93	
22. Tamil Nadu	520,226	1.07	
23. Kerala	261,475	1.03	
Total	57,82,905	3.52	10.74
Island Region			
24. Andaman & Nicobar Islands	22,361	11.85	
25. Lakshadweep	37,760	93.82	
Total	60,121	26.26	0.11
All India Grand Total	5,38,15,301		

*The remaining States of Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana and the Union Territories of Chandigarh, Delhi and Pondicherry did not show any Scheduled Tribe.

The North-Eastern region of the Himalayas in India comprises of Seven states—Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. It is linked with the rest of the country by a narrow neck of India territory hardly about 60 kms wide between the foothills of the Himalayas in the north and Bangladesh in the south. The total area of this region is 255,120 sq. kms. It is evident from table 2 that out of the seven administrative units of this region, Arunachal Pradesh covers the largest area—83,760 sq. kms, followed by Assam—78,400 sq. kms., Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram are almost of similar area i.e. 22,356 sq. kms., 22,460 sq.kms. and 21,090 sq. kms. respectively. Nagaland has 16,536 sq. kms. followed by Tripura—10,477 sq. kms.

The distribution of 26,607,199 persons of the North-Eastern region of India shows their dominance in Assam—74.7 per cent, Tripura—7.7 per cent comes next, followed by Manipur—

5.4 per cent and Meghalaya—5.00 per cent. Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh have 2.9 per cent, 1.9 per cent and 2.4 per cent population respectively.

Table-2
Density of Population of North-East India
(1981 Census) Final figures

State	Area in sq. kms (000)	Population	Per cent	Density per sq. km
North East India	255,12	2,66,07,199		104
1. Assam*	78.4	1,98,96,843	74.1	254
2. Arunachal Pradesh	83.76	6,31,839	2.4	8
3. Manipur	22.3	14,20,953	5.4	64
4. Meghalaya	22.46	13,35,819	5.0	60
5. Mizoram	21.1	4,93,757	1.9	23
6. Nagaland	16.6	7,74,930	2.9	47
7. Tripura	10.5	20,53,058	7.7	196

* Projected figures for 1981

The population of the Scheduled Tribes varies remarkably in different States of this region. 21.76 per cent of the total population of the North East are tribals, while, on the national level, their share is only 7.85 per cent. Table 3 clearly shows that Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland states of this region are highly dominated by tribals as they comprise 69.82 per cent, 93.55 per cent, 80.58 per cent and 83.99 per cent of the total population of the respective states. In Assam their share is minimal (10.99 per cent—1971 figures) but in Tripura (28.44 per cent) and Manipur (17.30 per cent) the percentage of Scheduled Tribes is higher than the regional figure (21.76 per cent).

A sizeable population of Scheduled Castes is noted in Tripura and Assam i.e. 15.12 per cent and 6.24 per cent (1971 census) respectively of the total population in each state. In other administrative units of this region Manipur (1.25 per cent), Meghalaya (0.41 per cent), Arunachal Pradesh (0.46 per cent), Mizoram (0.03 per cent) and Nagaland (0.00 per cent)— the population of Scheduled Castes is almost negligible. In the North-Eastern region of India they account for 5.75 per cent of the total population of the region while their share is 15.75 per cent in the total population of India.

The distribution of the population of this region in different residential perspectives show that the percentage of rural population is considerably higher in each State in comparison to all India figure. 86.87 per cent of the total population of this region are inhabitants of rural area. The percentage of urban population in Manipur (26.43 per cent) 18.07, Mizoram (24.68 per cent) and Meghalaya (18.07 per cent) seems to be closer to the national figure (19.91 per cent) while, in other states of North-Eastern region, it is lower.

Table-3
Percentage Distribution of Population by Area and Tribes, 1981
 (per cent)

State	Rural	Urban	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes
1. Arunachal Pradesh	93.44	6.56	0.46	69.82
2. Assam	89.71	10.29	6.24	10.99
3. Manipur	73.57	26.43	1.25	27.30
4. Meghalaya	81.93	18.07	0.41	80.58
5. Mizoram	75.32	24.68	0.03	93.55
6. Nagaland	89.64	10.36	—	83.99
7. Tripura	89.64	10.99	15.12	28.44
8. Total	86.87	13.13	5.75	21.76
All India	74.09	23.01	14.60	7.85

Source : Census of India, 1981; Series I, India, Paper 2 of 1984—General population and population of SC and ST, Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Government of India.

Extremely low density of population in this region is the result of isolation and neglect due to its unique ecological setting consisting of the high and low mountains with a network of rivers, valleys and dense forests. It is evident from table 2 that the population density varies from 8 persons per sq. km. for Arunachal Pradesh to 254 persons per sq. km. for Assam. Tripura stands second with 196 persons per sq. km. Manipur (64), Meghalaya (60), Nagaland (47) and Mizoram (23) have very low population density as compared to 104 persons per sq. km. in this region.

Table 4 shows that the population density is maximum in the Tirap district (18) of Arunachal Pradesh while it is as low as 6 persons per sq. km. in Lohit district. In the remaining three districts of the state it does not vary considerably. Assam state shows only 16 and 37 persons per sq. km. in North Cachar hills and Karbi Anglong districts respectively on the one hand while, the population density is more than 250 persons per sq. km. in Nowgong (302), Kamrup (289) and Cachar (246) districts. In all the six districts of Manipur the population density is very low and almost uniform except, in the Manipur Central district (415 persons per sq. km.). In each district of the Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland administrative units, the population density does not vary considerably. In the West Tripura district of Tripura State of this region, the density of the population was 322 persons per sq. km. While in the North Tripura (140) and the south Tripura (149) districts it is almost equal.

Table-4
Population by Districts, 1981

State/District	Area (sq.km.)	Total Population (persons)	Scheduled Castes (Persons)	Scheduled Tribes (Persons)	Density (per sq. km.)
		3	4	5	
1	2	3	4	5	6
Arunachal Pradesh					
1. Kameng	13,728*	106,038	418	79,249	8
2. Subansiri	20,042*	152,060	634	123,736	8
3. Siang	18,518*	144,615	566	113,051	8
4. Lohit	11,402*	69,498	910	30,130	6
5. Tirap	7,024*	128,650	234	79,957	18
6. Dibang Valley	13,029*	30,978	157	15,044	2
Assam**					
1. Goalpara	10,359	2,225,103	120,006	308,287	215
2. Kamrup	9,863	2,854,183	164,762	298,090	289
3. Darrang	8,775	1,736,188	77,104	185,640	198
4. Nowgong	5,561	1,680,895	167,263	125,115	302
5. Sibsagar	8,989	1,837,389	86,120	125,311	204
6. Lakhimpur	5,646	711,600	41,089	204,811	123
7. Dibrugarh	7,023	1,411,119	36,700	81,489	201
8. Karbi Anglong	10,332	379,310	9,820	210,039	37
9. N. Cachar Hills	4,890	76,047	826	52,583	16
10. Cachar	6,962	1,713,318	208,867	15,283	246
Manipur					
1. Manipur North	3,271	155,421	217	105,655	48
2. Manipur West	4,391	62,289	7	29,259	14
3. Manipur South	4,570	134,776	109	116,254	29
4. Manipur Central	2,238	929,077	146	24,141	415
5. Manipur East	4,544	82,946	33	74,238	18
6. Tengnoupal	3,313	56,444	187	35,430	17
Meghalaya					
1. Khasi Hills	10,443*	672,990	1,480	531,076	64
2. Jaintia Hills	3,819	156,402	47	148,710	41
3. Garo Hills	8,167*	506,427	3,965	396,559	62
Mizoram					
1. Aizawl	12,588	340,826	81	320,088	27
2. Lungalei	4,536	86,511	17	79,607	19
3. Chhimtuipui	3,957	66,420	37	62,212	17

1	2	3	4	5	6
Nagaland					
1. Kohima	4,041	250,105	—	163,905	62
2. Mokorchung	1,615	104,193	—	95,407	65
3. Tuensang	4,228	152,332	—	142,376	36
4. Phek	2,026	70,618	—	66,058	35
5. Zunheboto	1,255	61,161	—	58,249	49
6. Wokha	1,628	57,583	—	54,345	35
7. Mon	1,786	78,938	—	70,536	44
Tripura					
1. West Tripura	3,033	976,252	165,331	244,146	322
2. North Tripura	3,872	541,248	65,664	147,884	140
3. South Tripura	3,851	535,558	79,389	191,890	149

Sources : 1. Census of India, 1981, Series-I, India, Part II-B(i), Primary Census Abstract General Population, Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Government of India.

* Provisional figures

** 1971 Census figures

It is evident from table 5 that the total population of this region was about 4.3 million in 1901 which has come up to 26.6 million in 1981 i.e. the population of the region has gone up by more than six times during last eight decades. The rate of increase is considerably different in administrative units of the region. In Arunachal Pradesh there were 3,37 thousand persons in 1961 while, according to the 1981 census they are 6,28 thousand. The population of Assam was about 3.3 million in 1901 which was 19.9 million in 1981 i.e. population has increased 6 times during 1901-1981. In Manipur there were only 0.3 million persons while according to the 1981 census they are 1.4 million. Similarly, Meghalaya population was 0.3 million in 1901 which has gone up to 1.3 million in 1981. Eighty two thousand persons were there in Mizoram in 1901 while, according to the 1981 census they were 4,88 thousand. The population of Nagaland has increased approximately seven times during the last eight decades. It was 1,02 thousand in 1901 while according to the 1981 census the population of the state was 7,73 thousand. The population of Tripura has increased from 1,73 thousand in 1901, to 20,60 thousand in 1981 i.e. approximately has increased from 1,73 thousand in 1901, to 20,60 thousand in 1981 i.e. approximately it reflects twelve times increase in the population during the last eight decades.

The population of seven administrative units of North-East India during 1901-81 is given in table 5.

Table-5
Population Trends in North-Eastern Region

(Thousand persons)

Census	Arunachal Pradesh	Assam	Manipur	Meghalaya	Mizoram	Nagaland	Tripura	All India
1901	—	3,290	284	341	82	102	173	238,396
1911	—	3,849	346	394	91	149	230	252,093
1921	—	4,637	384	422	98	159	304	251,321
1931	—	5,560	446	481	124	179	382	278,977
1941	—	6,695	512	556	153	190	513	318,661
1951	—	8,029	578	606	196	213	639	361,088
1961	337	10,837	780	769	266	369	1,142	439,235
1971	468	14,625	1,073	1,012	332	516	1,556	548,160
1981*	628	19,903*	1,434	1,328	488	773	2,060	665,288**

Sources : 1. Statistical Handbook, State Governments/Union Territory Administration.
2. Pocket Book of Population Statistics, Census Centenary, 1972, Office of the Registrar General, Government of India.
3. Series-I, India, Paper No. 1 of 1981, General Population.

Note : * Population shown against 1981 is provisional.
** 1981 Census was not done in Assam State, the population reported for 1981 is projected population and the same has been included in 'All India Total' also.

Population trend of this region shows a constant increase during last two decades. The rate of increase was 35.05 per cent during 1961-71 and 35.91 per cent during 1971-81. It is evident from table 5 that Assam, Mizoram and Nagaland administrative units of this region show an increasing rate of population i.e. 36.09, 46.99 and 49.61 per cent respectively during 1971-81 in comparison to 1961-71 i.e. 34.95 per cent 24.81 per cent and 39.84 per cent respectively. Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura show a declining trend in population growth as it was 38.87 per cent, 37.56 per cent, 31.60 per cent and 36.25 per cent during 1961-71 and 34.19 per cent, 33.64 per cent, 21.34 per cent and 32.39 per cent respectively during 1971-81. The National figure also shows a little decrease during last two decades.

On the basis of table 5, the population trend in this region is mentioned in table 6.

Table-6
Population Trends in North-East India

(per cent)

Deca- des	N.E. Region	Aruna- chal Pradesh	Assam	Mani- pur	Megha- laya	Mizo- ram	Naga- land	Tripura	India
1901-11	—	—	16.99	21.83	15.54	10.98	46.08	32.95	5.74
1911-21	—	—	20.47	10.98	7.11	7.69	6.71	32.17	0.31
1921-31	—	—	19.91	16.15	13.98	26.53	12.58	25.66	11.00
1931-41	—	—	20.41	14.80	15.59	23.39	6.15	34.29	14.22
1941-51	—	—	19.93	12.89	8.99	28.01	12.11	24.56	13.31
1951-61	—	—	34.97	34.95	26.90	35.71	73.24	78.72	31.64
1961-71	35.05	38.87	34.95	37.56	31.60	24.81	39.84	36.25	24.80
1971-81	35.91	34.19	36.09	33.64	21.34	46.99	49.81	32.39	24.74

There are nearly 130 distinct tribal communities in this region and the majority of them inhabit the hilly and mountainous slopes. They account for 21.76 per cent of the total population of North-East India. Table 7 indicates that the distribution of the tribal population in seven administrative units of the region is uneven. They are 37.78 per cent alone in Assam followed by 18.59 per cent in Meghalaya. In Nagaland (11.25 per cent) and Tripura (10.08 per cent) States they are distributed almost equally, Arunachal Pradesh (7.63 per cent), Manipur (6.70 per cent) and Mizoram (7.97 per cent) each have less than 10 per cent of the tribal population of this region. These figures are based on 1981 census.

Table-7
Distribution of Tribal Population in North-East India.

State					Tribal Population
Arunachal Pradesh	...	...	...	...	441,167 (7.63%)
Assam	...	...	...	...	2,186,663 (37.78%)
Manipur	...	...	...	...	387,977 (6.70%)
Meghalaya	...	...	...	...	1,076,345 (18.59%)
Mizoram	...	...	...	...	461,907 (7.97%)
Nagaland	...	...	...	...	650,885 (11.25%)
Tripura	...	...	...	...	583,920 (10.08%)
Total (North-East India)	...	...	...	...	5,788,864 (100%)

Arunachal Pradesh also accounts for 34 tribal groups out of which 14 are regarded major ones. 69.82 per cent of the total population of this newly formed State belongs to different tribal groups. Among these tribals Adi, Dafla, Monpa, Nocte, Wancho, Tagin and Apa Tani each consists of considerable high population while Hill Miri, Sulung, Khampti, Miji, Mishing, Aka, Sherdukpen, Singpho and Bangro each account for less than 10 thousand persons.

As per 1981 census the total Scheduled Tribe population of Assam was 2,186,663 (projected figures) and they constituted 10.99 per cent of the total population of the State. Twenty one Scheduled tribe groups are usually classified into two broad categories in term of their locational significance. These are (a) the Hill tribes and (b) the plain tribes. Fourteen tribes in two Autonomous Hill districts, namely, Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills are (1) Chakma, (2) Dimasa Cachari, (3) Garo, (4) Hajong (5) Hmar, (6) Khasi, Jaintia, Synting, War, Bhoi, Lyngngam, (7) Any Kuki tribes, (8) Lakher, (9) Man (*Tai* speaking), (10) Any Mizo (Lushai) tribes, (11) Mikir, (12) Any Naga tribe, (13) Pawi and (14) Synteng. (1) Barmans in Cachar, (2) Boro, Boro-Cachari, (3) Deori, (4) Hojai, (5) Cachari, Sonowal, (6) Lalung, (7) Mech, (8) Miri and (9) Rabha are nine tribal groups which inhabit the plains of Assam.

According to the 1981 census the tribal population of Manipur State was 387,977 persons. They account for 27.30 per cent of the total population of the State. Aimol, Anal, Chiru, Humar, Thadou, Tangkhul, Paite, Kabui and Maram are the well known tribes of the State. In all there are 24 tribal groups in the State.

10,76,345 tribal people constitute 80.58 per cent of the total population of Meghalaya. This State is noted for three matriarchal groups, namely the Khasi, the Lushai and the Garo besides Chakmas and Hajongs which are migrant groups.

In Mizoram the population of Scheduled tribes was 461,907 according to 1981 Census. Almost all the persons of this State belong to one or other tribal group. They account for 93.55 per cent of the total population of the state. Mizo and Pawi-Lakher are the main groups of the State.

Nagaland is also dominated by the tribal people. According to the 1981 census they were 650,885 i.e. 83.99 per cent of the total population of the State. There are 16 recognised tribal groups in Nagaland out of which Angami, Ao, Chang, Konyak, Lhota, Phom, Rengma and Sema are major ones. Kuki, Cachari, Garo and Mikir are some other minor tribal groups of the State.

Tripura accounts for 28.44 per cent tribals of the total population of the State. According to 1981 census there are 583,920 tribal people in the State. Among 18 tribal groups Tripura, Riang, Jamatia, Chakma, Halam, Mag and Noatia are major tribes each having more than ten thousand population. The minor tribes are Kuki, Garo, Munda, Lushai, Orang and few others.

The ethnic composition of seven States of this region reveals that in Arunachal Pradesh 22.01 per cent of the population is of Hindu religion. The population of Muslims (0.21 per cent), Christians (0.85 per cent), Sikhs (0.21 per cent) and Jains (0.02 per cent) is almost negligible. Buddhists accounts for 13.03 per cent but the majority of population (63.46 per cent) belongs to religious persuasions of tribal origin (others). In Assam the majority of the population (72.51 per cent) is Hindu followed by Muslims (24.56 per cent) and Christians (2.61 per cent). The population of Scheduled Castes is also sizeable which comes to be 6.24 per cent of the total population of the state. Hindu (58.90 percent) and Christians (26.00 per cent) form two major religious groups in Manipur. Christians (46.94 per cent) dominate the population of Meghalaya followed by the persons of other religious persuasions (31.42 per cent). There are 18.48 per cent Hindus, 2.57 per cent Muslims, 0.10 per cent Sikhs and 0.20 per cent Buddhists. In Mizoram 86.14 per cent of the total population are Christians. Hindus (6.33 per cent) and Buddhists (6.93 per cent) come next while the population of Muslims (0.60 per cent) and Sikhs (0.30 per cent) is

negligible. In Nagaland 66.86 per cent are Christians followed by 20.93 per cent of other religious persuasions and 11.43 per cent Hindus, Muslims (0.58 per cent) Sikhs (0.91 per cent) and Jains (0.19 per cent) in the numerical sense form the negligible section, of the State population. Hindus (89.59 per cent) and Muslims (6.69) are the main religious groups of Tripura State of this region.

The ethnic composition of North-East India is given in table 9.

Table-9
Distribution of Population by Religion, 1971 (thousand Persons)

State/ Union Territory	(Per cent of total population given in brackets below)							
	Hindus	Muslims	Chris- tians	Sikhs	Budd- hists	Jains	Other Religion and per- suasions	Reli- gion not stated
Arunachal	103	1	4	1	61	Neg.	297	1
Pradesh	(22.02)	(0.21)	(0.85)	(0.21)	(13.03)	(a)	(63.46)	(0.21)
Assam	10,605	3,592	381	12	23	13	Neg.	(0.00)
	(72.51)	(24.56)	(2.61)	(0.08)	(0.15)	(0.09)	(—)	
Manipur	632	71	279	1	Neg.	2	83	4
	(58.90)	(6.62)	(26.00)	(0.09)	(—)	(0.19)	(7.74)	(0.37)
Meghalaya	187	26	475	1	2	Neg.	318	1
	(18.48)	(2.57)	(46.94)	(0.10)	(0.20)	(—)	(7.74)	(0.10)
Mizoram	21	2	286	1	23	Neg.	Neg.	—(0.00)
	(6.33)	(0.60)	(86.14)	(0.30)	(6.93)	(—)	(—)	
Nagaland	59	3	345	1	Neg.	1	108	Neg.
	(11.43)	(0.58)	(66.86)	(0.19)	—	(0.19)	(20.93)	—
Tripura	1,394	104	16	Neg.	42	Neg.	—	—
	(89.59)	(6.68)	(1.03)	(—)	(2.7)	(—)	—	—
Total	13,001	3,799	1,786	17	151	16	806	6
	(66.39)	(19.40)	(9.12)	(0.09)	(0.77)	(0.08)	(4.12)	(0.03)

Neg.—Negligible

Sources : 1. Pocket Book of Population Statistics, Census Centenary, 1972, Office of the Registrar General Government of India.
2. Statistical Handbook, Assam, 1974, Government of India.

Further scrutiny of the table 9 reveals that Assam, Manipur and Tripura are dominated by Hindus while, in Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland States of this region, Christians predominate. An overall picture of ethnic composition of North-East India shows the dominance of Hindus which are 66.39 per cent followed by 19.40 per cent Muslims and only 9.12 per cent Christians.

Chapter IV

Ethnicity and History

From very ancient time Greater Assam has been the meeting ground of peoples, their languages, their ethnic elements as well as cultures. Various people took active part in the building up of Assamese cultures; mention may be made of the speakers of the *Austro-Asiatic* language, at present represented by the inhabitants of the Khasi and Jaintia hills of Meghalaya. After the *Austro-Asiatic* speaking people came successive migrations of people speaking Tibeto-Burman languages. This family is divided and sub-divided into a number of branches and sub-branches, one of the most important groups of the Tibeto-Burman family is Bodos which include the Cachar, the Rabha, the Koch, the Lalung, the Dimasa, the Garo, the Chutia, and the Maram etc.

The Nagas also speak languages which form a section of the Kuki-chin sub-branch of the Assam-Burmese branch of the Tibeto-Burman. The Adi, the Dafla, the Miri, the Mishmi etc. of Arunachal, are also included under the North-Assamese branch of the Tibeto-Burman Family (Das B.M., 1967). These people reached upto Tripura but not beyond. Some of these people settled in the fertile plains of the Brahmaputra while other preferred to live in the hills.

The migration of Indo-Aryan speaking people to this region started in proto-historic times. The Aryans called the Tibeto-Burman speaking inhabitants *Kirates* (Indo-Mongoloids representing various dialect groups). It is not perfectly known at what time the caucasoid Aryans entered the valleys of the Brahmaputra. But there is no doubt that they came at a fairly early period as suggested by the references in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The conflict between Lord Krishna and the great king of Assam like Narkasur, Banasur, and Rukmini, son of Bhishma; and also between the Pandavas and Babruvahan and Hirimba, gave clear indication of early contacts of Assam with Aryan India. Traces of Kalita settlement in the Sagiya tracts of Eastern Assam is also suggestive of early Aryan contact with the mongoloid settlers of Assam (Das, B.M. Ibid).

The Ahoms, a section of the Thai, conquered Assam in the 13th century A.D. and established their kingdom. Other branches of Thai, namely Khamyang, the Khampti, the Phakial, the Aiton, the Turung also followed the Ahom.

As regards the ethnic make up of Assam, it may be said very broadly that the caste populations, which mainly occupy the valley of the Brahmaputra, the caucasoid in origin and that they came from the West. In physical features and ethnic characteristics they are comparable to the caucasoid peoples of some parts of northern India. On the other hand, the most predominating constituent ethnic element of the tribal population is mongoloid. The mongoloid people entered Assam from the north and the east and to some extent from the south by various routes of migration. Researches reflect that considerable amount of admixture took place between these two major ethnic groups namely, the caucasoid and the mongoloid, (Das, B.M. 1967).

THE LALUNG

Each tribe of Assam has a somewhat distinct origin, history and route of migration, which will not be possible to discuss here. The Lalung, for example, which is one of the tribes of Assam on whom much research has been done call themselves, Tiwa, which in their language means "*the people*" who were lifted from below. There is a Lalung tale as to how the Mikirs came to distinguish the Lalung as the people who were drowned in water and were rescued by them.

The Lalungs have been connected by the Hindu traditions and myths. There is a belief that the *Lalung* were the Kshatriyas, the Warrior class. When *Parasurama* set out to destroy all the Kshatriyas to avenge the death of his father at the hand of a king named Sahastrabahu Arjuna the Lalungs decided to go into hiding and escaped to the Lalung hills which were somewhere to the north of the Brahmaputra. They lived many centuries in the Lalung hills in disguise eventually forgetting their original traditions and language. As a result when they returned to their own land they were not recognised as Kshatriyas, but to be known as Lalung after the *Lalung* hills where they had lived so long. (Shyam Chaudhary, N.K. & M.M. Das, 1973).

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

The history of Arunachal Pradesh is shrouded in the mists of traditions and mythology. The presence of ruins in the foothills suggests some contacts between the ancient rulers of Assam and the tribesmen living near the plains. Local tradition regards the country round Sadiya as the ancient Vidarbha, and the archaeological relics at Bhishmaknagar in Lohit as marking the capital of King Bhishmak whose daughter Rukmini was carried away on the eve of her marriage by Lord Krishna himself.

In addition, there are several such archaeological sites of ancient times which reflect certain contacts with Hindu culture. In the Lohit division are the ruins of the copper temple Tameswari which, at one time, must have attracted many worshippers, and a place of great sanctity in the beautiful lower reaches of the Lohit river, the Brahmakund, where Parasurama was reputed to have opened a passage through the hills with a single blow of his axe, which is visited every year by thousands of pilgrims (Elwin in 1960 pp. 1).

The old records and archaeological sites and folklore traditions have to be explored to know more about the history of the tribes living in Arunachal Pradesh. It has been established that the Mishmis must have visited the forts and temples of Lohit and probably helped to build them just as the Daflas must have worked at Ita and the Akas at Bhalukpong. In general, the Ahom kings adopted a policy of conciliation towards the tribes, supporting it by a display of force when it could be effectively employed.

When the British took over the control of Assam from Purander Singh in 1838, they found that the war like tribes of the frontier had become even more aggressive as a result of the breakdown of the authority of Government, and for the remainder of the century they largely followed the policy of the Ahom Kings. They did what they could to make friends with the tribe, they protected the plains people against their raids, they established outposts in the foothills and from time to time imposed blockade and undertook punitive expeditions into the interior.

The loose political control of the ancient rulers of Assam over NEFA and the sporadic intervention by the British ruler came to an end with the appointment of an Assistant Political Officer at Sadiya in 1882. J.F. Needham who was the first Assistant Political Officer, continued

uninterrupted till 1905. He undertook a number of long tours in the unknown terrain and with his continued efforts he built up a powerful influence over the aggressive tribes.

Following some outrages by the Adis and the Mishmi in 1906-7, local officers called for a vigorous application of the 'big stick' policy which was rejected first due to the Government of India's pre-occupation with the Tibet—an affair following on Col. Youngusband's expeditions to Lhasa in 1904. Ultimately, the British Government had to change its policy for two major reasons: (a) Murder of Noel Willinson and (b) threat posed by the Chinese incursions into some points of the frontier region. (Sen, B. 1967: 164-171).

Some missions were sent into the frontier region between 1911-13 to survey the entire area; out of which came the defining of the boundary line with Tibet known as the Mac Mohan line running roughly along the Himalayan watershed from the North-East of Bhutan to the Isu Razi pass of the north of Myanmar.

Henceforward the task of creating better relations between the tribes and the rest of India continued slowly. Finally after India's independence, the new leaders of free India realised the vital potentialities of the tribal population of the Frontier both for its backwardness and strategic location, and finally in 1954 a new status was accorded to it in the Indian Constitution. Major changes continued to take place and then the status of Union Territory was granted to NEFA and finally it was named as Arunachal Pradesh in 1971. Various developmental activities have been carried out in the area with every care and sympathy; the major achievements are the spread of education, better communications, economic stability and, recently, the establishment of the new University.

It would, however, be a mistake to assume that the entire history of Arunachal Pradesh was marked by hostility, as the British sources have depicted them. It is also true that there has long been a tradition of trade and mutual friendliness between the tribes of the foothills and the people of the Brahmaputra valley. In order to establish it, I feel tempted here to quote a few lines from Elwin to bring out the nature of interactions that existed there between the plains and the hill peoples.

"The Sherdukpens, and some of the Daflas, have intimate relations with the villages around Charduar. The Noctes, who were early influenced by Vaishnava preachers, have long had business connections with the merchants of Marghorita. The Mishmis have, for a century past, brought their special products to barter for cloth and other goods in the plains. Many of the leading tribal peoples, and particularly those along the foothills, speak Assamese and they are now learning Hindi as well".

MEGHALAYA

Meghalaya has the unique distinction of having prehistoric sites reminding us of its hoary antiquity. It was between 1969 and 1971 that the presence of paleoliths was reported from the Garo Hills (Sharma T.C. 1975). It is an arduous task before the Paleoanthropologists to link the ancient evidences with the contemporary ethnic group. In the light of case studies, however, it is suggested that "māh invaded the area (the Garo Hills) and won in the tussle between forces of unfavourable environmental condition and human power equipped with technical knowledge of high standard". (Gosh, A.K.: 1978: 12).

In addition to the Prehistoric sites, Meghalaya has, again, the unique distinction of preserving the speakers of the Austric language, at present represented by the Khasi and the Pnar inhabiting the Khasi and the Jaintia hills, reference about which has also been mentioned earlier.

We have no written records about the origin, migrations, and the long or short range history of these tribal groups inhabiting the hill districts of Meghalaya. But the traditional lore about the migration of these tribes, particularly the Garos, is a story of constant strife with the plains people. The Garos have a belief that before settling in their present habitat, they settled in the Brahmaputra Valley and due to the miseries they had to suffer in the hands of the plains people, they were forced to take refuge in these hills.

The Garo have a legend which says that they were not the original inhabitants of Garo Hills. According to the legend the ancestors of the Garo inhabited a province of Tibet named Torha whence they started on a journey for some unknown reason under the leadership of two chiefs named Jappa Jlinpa and Sukpa Bongipa. In their wanderings they passed through several places and crossed the Brahmaputra on rafts of Plantain stems. At Baghmela Pahar, a hill about 5 miles south-east of Boko, they had a meeting with the Khasis and after the meeting they moved westward and finally settled in the Garo Hills (Majumdar, D.N. : 1980).

There may not be much historical truth in this and other such legends but these evidently reflect the migratory nature of the Garo who later came to live near the land of the Khasis.

In Pre-British days the areas adjacent to the present habitat of the Garo were under the zamindars of Karaibari, Kaluma Lupara and Habraghat. Then the Garos had to struggle constantly with these zamindars. The British felt concerned with these troubles and in 1788, John Eliot was deputed by the British authorities to enquire into the causes of the troubles between the zamindars and the Garos. John Eliot, who was the first outsider to enter the Garo area led two expeditions in the different parts of Garo Hills and subsequently suggested that the zamindar should not be allowed to interfere with the Garo. In the light of this recommendation the Commissioner of Koch Behar passed an order banning the zamindar of Karaibari to encroach upon Garo territory. It, however, did not prove to be effective and in 1876, the Garos rose in rebellion and raided the headquarters of the zamindar at Karaibari and burnt his house.

In the meantime, Foreign Missionaries were invited, and the first to arrive was Rev. Scott of the American Baptist Mission in 1866. Under their process of evangelization and philanthropic programmes, the Garo converts increased from 670 in 1871 to 5,430 in 1911. The first Christian Missionary came to the Khasi Hills in about 1813 and in 1842 to the Jaintia Hills. Taken together, the stronghold of the British rule continued to increase. The British authorities realised that until an administrative headquarter was established inside the Garo Hills, it would be difficult to bring the Garos effectively under their administration. Finally, Lt. Williamson was deputed to select a place for the district headquarters. He established the administrative headquarters at Tura in 1866. Later he was appointed the first Deputy Commissioner of the Garo Hills district (Majumdar, D.N. : 1980).

A strong challenge to the ascendancy of Christianity was offered by a Khasi Revivalist Movement, the Sene Khasi in 1899. It was in 1925, when Khasi nationalism took a somewhat concrete shape with the formation of the Khasi National Durbar. On the eve of the visit of the Simon Commission, in 1928, the Khasi National Durbar, pressed for the recognition of the Khasi State. In 1933, in the wake of the move for the Federation of the native States with India, the association of Khasi Chiefs (Siems) adopted the scheme of the "Federal Khasi States" and later on they pressed for recognition of the Federation.

The hill areas of the North-East witnessed a turning point on the eve of India's Independence in 1945-46. A Khasi States Peoples Union was formed which resolved to form a Khasi States

Federation. The Garo Hills, like its neighbours, was restless on the eve of Independence. In 1946, the Garo National Council demanded that its own Legal Council be vested with all powers including taxation, administration of justice etc.

In view of all these political movements, the VI Schedule of the Constitution was enacted. It provided for the Regional Autonomy for the tribal people living in the Hill Districts. These provisions under the VI Schedule and autonomy given to the Hill Districts of Assam for self administration did not keep the local people satisfied for long. The demand for separation of the Hill Areas from Assam was vigorously pressed by a section of Hill Area Leaders in 1953 before the State Reorganisation Commission. During the 1957 general elections, the Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU) and the Garo National Council (GNC) on the basis of the Hill States demand swept the polls. After the verdict of the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills in favour of a separate state, the movement gathered momentum and things started taking a serious turn. In 1960, the All Party Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) was born. In the general election of 1962, 53 per cent of the Hill people voted for Hill States as against 27 per cent opposing it. Nagaland was more or less calm, as the formation of a separate state for Nagaland was agreed upon but the Mizo Hills started showing signs of extremist activities. In the 1962 polls, in the Mizo Hill about 72 per cent of the Mizos voted for the Hill states (Sinha, A.P. : 1972).

In the light of continued and aggressive movements, the Government of India decided in 1968 to reorganise the State of Assam, by forming a Hill State which would be completely autonomous in certain subjects and finally the Meghalaya came into being in 1970. (Sinha, A.P. 1972).

MIZO

The term 'Mizo' appears to have been derived from two Mizo words-*Mi* and *zo*. *Mi* in Mizo means, "man". There is dispute on the term *zo*. According to one view '*zo*' means highland and 'Mizo' means highlander or people living in high hills. Lalthanglana (1975:71) says '*zo*' may also mean cold region and therefore, Mizo signifies people of the cold region. People living on the hills could be called Mizo by the people of the hot and humid valleys.

It is difficult to give a chronological history of the Mizo migration in the absence of any written documents. From various collateral evidence, however, sometimes supported by folktales, we may attempt a broad outline. Choudhury (1959:92) writes that the classical Greek accounts contain references about Lushai Kukis residing in the present area of Mizoram and they might have settled before the first century A.D. The available accounts, however, do not corroborate Choudhury's observation. Liangkhaia (1951:39) is of the opinion that the Mizos have been in the present area for about two hundred years, while Van Chhunga (1955:80-81) writes that the Mizo settlements in the present area of the Mizoram have existed for a period between three hundred and four hundred years.

The frequent migrations to which they were subjected and the comparative lack of uninterrupted stable life before they came to settle in their present area may have something to do with their sense of insecurity and a capacity to adjust to various situations.

It is found that the Mizos might have formed part of the people who once inhabited the T'ao valley of Kansu province in the north-west of China. Because of many disturbances they moved

towards the border of Tibet and Burma probably around the seventh century A.D. Then, through Kukaung valley they came to the Chindwin belt. Zawla (1964) puts the years of this migration around 996 A.D. They confined their settlement to the Kalbaw valley specially around Khampet. It has been further established that because of Shan penetration, they left the Kalbaw valley for the Chin Hills and settled on the Than range. In the late 15th century they again moved to the Len range near Tiau river. Around 1700 A.D., owing to the pressure from Pawih, the Mizos crossed the Tiau river and came to the place now called Mizoram. It is said that they built a big village at Selsih around 1740 A.D. The village later on broke up and they started moving further west. They came into confrontation with the British also and that gradually led to the final annexation towards the close of the nineteenth century.

THE NAGA

Though the 'Nagas' may seem to be isolated from the present mainstream of Indian life yet they are an integral part of Indian Society since the Vedic period.

The origin of the name 'Naga' has given rise to some considerable speculations. The term 'Naga' includes the various tribes of present state of Nagaland, the tribes Nocte, Wancho, Tangsa, etc. of Arunachal Pradesh and their likes in Manipur State and in the Somra tract of Myanmar.

Dr. W.C. Smith (1925) has mentioned the opinions of different scholars about the origin of the word 'Naga'. For example according to Peal, the true form of this word is not *Naga* but *Noga* from a root 'nog' or 'nok', meaning 'people'. They are so named in the Buranjis or Chronicles or History of the Kings of Assam. They are still called *Nooa* by the Assamese; only the Bengali babu, by way of confusion, termed them Naga (snake) or snake worshippers of India.

E.A. Gait has observed, "the collective designation by which the Nagas are known to the Assamese seems to be derived as suggested by Holcombe and Peal, from "nok", which means, 'folks' in some of the tribal dialects. Incidentally, in some parts of the southern districts of rural Bengal, 'Lok'—people or folk is pronounced 'nok'.

Another theory, while admitting that the origin of the word is unknown supposes it to have come from the Sanskrit and that it was applied to the people because of their paucity of clothing (Naga).

Elwin lends support to view that the Naga has been derived from the Tibeto-Burman term, 'Nok' which means 'people'. He is of the opinion that it is common throughout India for tribals to call themselves by words meaning "man". They look on themselves simply as people, free of communal or caste associations.

It is difficult to say exactly when they entered into the present Nagaland, but the ancient Hindu literature mentions the presence of early Indo-Mongoloid (*Kirata*) in Eastern India speaking various Sino-Tibetan dialects as early as 1000 B.C. By that time the *Kiratas* were known to the Vedic Aryans as cave-dwellers from whom the Aryans obtained mountain produce like herbs and drugs. The four books of the Vedas, supposed to have been compiled in the 10th century B.C. mentions about the *Kirata* in the passages of the 'Yajurveda'. This shows that the *Kiratas* are at least as old as that period (Chatterjee, S.K: 1950). The Greek in the first century A.D. had heard of these people during their visit to western India and southern India as a wild people with the characteristic flat nose of the Mongol races.

The first reference in ancient literature about the people of this particular area was made by Ptolemy (Hutton, J.H: 1965-quoted from *Geographies* VII, II:18), in the 2nd century A.D., whom the Hindus spoke as "Nagalog" or naked people. In the light of other evidences it may be noted that Assamese speaking Indo-Aryan languages who are the most immediate neighbours of the Nagas used to be in constant contact with them throughout the Historic period.

During the British rule, the Nagas showed extra-ordinary persistence in their resistance initially, but were finally pacified (Report of the Census of Assam, 1901). With the advent of the British, the work of the Christian missionaries for the purposes of 'humanising' was also initiated in 1836 by David Scott, the first Commissioner of Assam.

In course of time, the Naga became conscious of the changes and rose to the occasion. The first organisation ever to be formed in Nagaland was the Naga Club which was founded in 1918 in Kohima and Mokokchung. It was in 1945 when the Naga Hill District Tribal Council was formed which changed its name to Naga National Council just after a year. Though it was originally aimed to foster the welfare and social aspiration of the Nagas, its sphere of activities gradually extended to politics as well. It worked for the achievement of solidarity of all the Nagas and ultimately emerged as the only political organisation of the Naga Hills.

The Naga National Council, in June 1947, issued an ultimatum that the Naga Hill should cease to be part of India after Independence was attained. Under the leadership of Phizo, the Naga delegation met the Prime Minister, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, in 1951 but the tempo of hostility continued to increase suspicions and anxiety prevailed all over the area. From 1952 onward, the relations between the Naga and the Government of India gradually deteriorated due to a series of unfavourable factors. In the middle of 1957, the Naga convened an All Tribes Naga Peoples Convention at Kohima to act as a via-media between the Government of India and Naga rebels. As a result, a separate administrative unit entitled Naga-Hill Tuensang Area (NHTA) under the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India was constituted to be administered by the Government of Assam. A regulation to this effect was promulgated by the President of the Republic of India on 1st December, 1957. Incidentally, for a time the Indian Frontier Administrative Service came under the External Affairs Ministry.

The hostility between the Government of India and the Naga people continued and sometimes became too violent. The Naga delegation met the Prime Minister in July 1960 and presented the 16-point Memorandum for further reconciliation.

In the meantime, with the initiative of the leaders of the Churches, a Peace Mission with Sri B.P. Chaliha, Rev. Michael Scott and Sri Jai Prakash Narayan as members was formed. The Peace Mission met in Kohima and did the initial work in the beginning of May 1964. On May 21, 1964, an Agreement for Cease-fire or suspension of operations in Nagaland was signed at Sakrabama village by the three members of the Peace Mission and six members on behalf of the Federal Government of Nagaland. This stoppage of operations became effective on September 6, 1964 and, since then, in spite of differences on the Peace Missions' proposal etc., peace has come back to the newly formed State of Nagaland.

TRIPURA

After the decline of the Deva dynasty in the early Medieval period the chief of the Tripura tribes rose into prominence in the hilly region of Tripura. They gradually extended their hold in the

plain lands of the Tripura region and came into collision with the Muslim power, which was firmly established in Bengal at that time, known in history as The Sultanate of Bengal.

The earliest chief of the Tripura tribe who successfully defended the country against the Muslim power of Bengal as recorded in *Rajmala* was Chhengthung Fa. According to it a large army was sent against Chhengthung Fa from Gour as a retaliatory measure against the Tripura chief for an incident in which one Hiravant Khan was allegedly plundered of his wealth on his way to Gour to present gift to the Sultan. The Kingdom which they established in this region came to be known as the Tripura Kingdom. They assumed the title Manikya, dropped the original title Fa, and their dynasty came to be known as the Manikya dynasty. According to *Rajmala*, again, this family belonged to the Lunar dynasty of the Kshatriya caste as in similar cases, they compiled a new genealogy. Most modern scholars believe that the Tripuris like the Cacharis and other tribes of Eastern India were Mongolian in origin. The late Prof. Suniti Kr. Chatterjee also classified them under the Indo-Mongoloids or the *Kiratas* and classified them as linguistically belonging to the Bodo group. The Bodo people occupied at one time the greater part of the North and East Bengal and the entire Brahmaputra valley.

It is difficult to ascertain the actual date of their migration to Tripura. It would be, however, safe to assume that they entered Tripura long before the establishment of the Muslim rule in Bengal (Roy Chaudhary : 1980)

The *Rajmala* refers to an inscription dated A.D. 1458 of king Dharma Manikya. In this inscription Maha Manikya was regarded as the father of Dharma Manikya. According to Tripura *Vamsabli* (Geneology) Dharma Manikya ruled from 1431 to 1462. He was a great supporter of art and learning.

The dynasty of Dharma Manikya through their descendants continued undisturbed till the British stationed a political agent in 1871 at Agartala with the special object of protecting British interest on the frontier, which suffered from Lushai raids throughout the state under British influence. This post, however, was abolished in 1978 and the Manikyas continued to do developmental work in their territory.

During the British period, the Manikya dynasty under the regimes of Radha Krishna Manikya, Virendra Kishore Manikya, Vir Vikram Manikya, Kirti Vikram did wonderful developmental and modernisation work within Tripura. By and large, they were enlightened and benevolent rulers who did their best for the all-round development of Tripura. It is interesting to note that the rulers of Manikya Dynasty of Tripura were great friends of the illustrious Tagore family of Bengal and had common interests in the Fine Arts and Literature. Rabindranath Tagore's famous drama "Visharjan" deals with an important episode in the history of Tripura. Gurudev Rabindranath's personal ties of friendship were with Maharaja Virchandra Manikya Bahadur. Both the drama "Visharjan" and the novel "Rajarshi" from which the first part of "Visharjan" was derived was intended to recall to the poet's Tripura friends the past glories of their ancestors.

Before the commencement of the Second World War Maharaja Virvikram embarked on a world tour and visited several places of the Far East, Europe and America. These long tours enabled him to gain first hand knowledge about the thoughts and actions of the modern world. He ushered in a lot of improvement in education and agriculture and encouraged the transfer of Jhum cultivation to plough cultivation. He also spent a large sum of money for the development of internal communications. It was due to his initiative that an aerodrome was constructed at

Agartala. The Maharaja died on the 17th May, 1947 at the age of 31. Before his death he had decided on the accession of Tripura to India.

After the death of Maharaja Vir Vikram, his son and successor Kriti Vikram became the Maharaja of Tripura. As he was a minor, a Council of Regency under the presidentship of Kriti Vikram's mother, the Dowager Maharani Kanchan Prabha Devi was formed to look after the administration. It was only after a year that the Tripura Merger Agreement was signed on September 1949 in Delhi, according to which an Administrator was appointed to supervise the administration of Tripura as Chief Commissioner from 15th October of 1949. It became a part 'C' State of India and it was under the provisions of the North-Eastern Act of 1971 that Tripura became a fulfledged state in 1972.

In the pre-medieval period, prior to the establishment of the Muslim rule in Bengal, Tripura had no distinct political status. It had virtually no political significance at that time. The archaeological evidence found in the region prove the fact that a large portion of this region, particularly the south-eastern part of the present State of Tripura, was politically attached to the kingdom of eastern Bengal known as Samatata, Vanga and Harikala.

From the year 507 B.C. to the eighth century A.D. Maharaja Vanya Gupta, a member of the dynasty of the Imperial Guptas, ruled over Samatata and granted lands in Tripura region. The seat of his kingdom was situated in or near the Tripura region. At first he was a local Governor under the Imperial Gupta monarch, but subsequently, he became an independent ruler. There are some sporadic materials in shape of archaeological relics, remnants and *Tamra Patra* in the light of which the history of the dynasties and kingdoms, which ruled Tripura during the Ancient and Medieval period, may be reconstructed (Roy Chaudhury, 1980).

Chapter V

New Trends in Jhum Economy

The North-Eastern region constitutes a homogeneous natural region of the hills, forests and other related geographical characteristics. The overall homogeneity and uniformity in the ecosystem has led to somewhat similar economic and material cultural situations. Except the two tribes—the Apa Tani and Angami—most of the tribal groups practise swidden cultivation alternately known as shifting cultivation, axe cultivation and slash-and-burn cultivation in the current Indian writings in Anthropology and in official documents.

In various regions of India the shifting cultivation is known by different terms. In Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, this type of cultivation is widely known as 'Jhum' and the cultivators as 'Jhumia'. Among the Adis of Arunachal Pradesh the shifting cultivation is known as '*Adi-Arick*' whereas in Tripura it is known as '*Hooknismono*'. In some part of Nagaland it is known as '*Tekonglu*'. Jhum cultivation goes under a variety of names in other parts of India: *Kurwa* or *Khallu* in the Santhal Parganas, *Bewara* in Ranchi and Palamau in Bihar and *Podu, Rema, Dahi, Kaman, Bringa, Gudia, Dongar Chas* in Orissa; *Penda, Dahiya, Bewar, Guharh, Farhha, Dippa Marhan* or *Erka* in Madhya Pradesh; and *Kondapady* in Andhra Pradesh.

The other variously called names in addition to shifting cultivation, slash-and-burn cultivation mentioned above are—nomadic agriculture, migratory primitive agriculture, primitive horticulture, brand village, hoe-and-burn cultivation, swidden agriculture and so on. In addition to these descriptive names and local terms, a particular type of farming with some distinctive features, while allowing for minor local variations, is commonly known as shifting cultivation.

According to the F.A.O's estimate (in the 4th World Forestry Congress) the actual area under shifting cultivation in the world was reported to be about 36 million sq. kms. inhabited by some 200 million people.

Taking an All India figure, approximately 5,55,507 scheduled tribe families of different areas of about 10.8 million hectares of land, are under the shifting type of agriculture (Report of the Commissioner 1955). In case of the North-East, a large percentage of total sown area is under Jhum or shifting cultivation. Except the State of Assam, the plains of Manipur and Tripura, the whole of the North-East is predominantly under the shifting cultivation. About 72 per cent of the total sown area of the State of Nagaland is under Jhum or shifting cultivation. (Barthakur 1978). According to the 1971 agricultural census there are 1,103,345 farming households in Nagaland State of which 47,427 farming households still depend entirely on shifting cultivation. The details about the land utilization in Nagaland are as follows:

1. Total area of the State	16,527 sq. km.
2. Total area operated for cultivation	6.40 lakh hectares

3. Total area at foothill & valleys available for cultivation	750 sq. km
4. Total estimated area subject to Jhum	5.86 lakh hectares

The Modus Operandi: Widely distributed over the country, the mode and practice of hill cultivation vary considerably but, in general, the hill cultivators follow thirteen stages in a cycle at their own convenience.

These are: (i) selecting the forest patch or land, (ii) worshipping, (iii) cutting the forest growth and spreading it for drying, (iv) collecting big logs and firewood, (v) setting fire to the shrubs, (vi) planning or final preparation of the field for sowing, (vii) sowing seeds with digging sticks or with the help of hoes, (viii) weeding, (ix) watching and protecting crop, (x) harvesting and storing, (xi) worshipping, (xii) merry-making, and (xiii) fallowing (Vidyarathi, 1963:32-55). All the members of a family are involved in the operations in some way or the other. The patch of forest land is left fallow for one to ten years as the case may be. In one particular plot they may raise only one crop or utilize it for two to three seasons, and these two stages of operation vary from place to place, from tribe to tribe. The main crops are maize, millet, green pulses, beans etc. Some specific account of hill cultivation found among different tribes would illustrate the situation.

The ethnic groups practising shifting cultivation in different parts of the North-East are available from the literatures, mainly based on the paper by Kaith, 1958, and further supplemented by monographs and other documents, the names of the tribes in terms of their states are as follows:

States	— <i>Tribes Practising shifting cultivation</i>
Assam	— Garo, Naga, Khasi, Mizo, Mikir, Miri, Dafla etc.
Manipur	— Kuki, Tangkhul, Hmar, Mao, Maring, Kabui, Kacha Naga.
Meghalaya	— Khasi, Garo, Jaintia, War, Pnar.
Nagaland	— Sema, Ao, Lhota, Konyak, Rengma, Tangkhul.
Tripura	— Tripura, Jamatia, Garo, Riang, Noatia, Lushai, Halam, Mag, Chakma.
Arunachal Pradesh	— Aka, Miji, Bangro, Bangni/Dafla, Adi, Miniyong, Padam Miri, Mishmi, Tangsa, Singhpho, Wancho, Nocte etc.
Mizoram	— Mizo, Kuki, Hmar, Lakher etc.

It is quite clear from the above table that all the Scheduled tribes of Arunachal Pradesh except the Apa Tani, Monpa and Sherdukpen practise shifting cultivation. Similarly, all the Scheduled tribes of Nagaland except the Angami and the Chakhesang (who practise cultivation) depend on shifting cultivation for their livelihood. In Mizoram all the Scheduled tribes are shifting cultivators whereas in Meghalaya the Scheduled tribes combine shifting cultivation with horticulture.

While the general pattern of shifting cultivation share basically similar features, they exhibit, however, in their details certain differences too. Several scholars who have studied the patterns of shifting cultivation in India, South-East Asia and elsewhere have described in detail the varied interaction of the shifting cultivators with the ecology on the one hand and the traditional beliefs and practices on the other.

In case of the North-Eastern Region, I feel tempted to give the example of the Ao Naga who practise shifting cultivation. The cycle of cultivation locally known as Tekonglu (tekong-dry and

alu-field) starts in January. The stages of Tekonglu as described by Ao and Roy Burman (1966: 55-63) are:

- (i) Selection of site; after the first-day clearance operation for construction of the field hut, the farmer returns home. If he dreams a bad omen he leaves the plot and selects another. A big area is selected for persons of one block (Pehal) in a village.
- (ii) Worship for good crop and protection.
- (iii) Clearance of forest for cultivation in early January. A plot of 1 to 1.3 hectares required a month engaging two persons a day. Both, men and women of the family work.
- (iv) Drying of felled trees and burning in February-March. Burning takes place usually on the seventh day of the full moon in the month of March.
- (v) Phujung ceremony-rites performed at the first visit after burning, by offering a fowl for good crop.
- (vi) Demarcation of plot and construction of a field house in the centre. Individual plots are demarcated by big logs from the big field of a block of village people (usually the whole village is divided into two blocks according to residential pattern as upper Khel and lower Khel).
- (vii) Preparation of *Luzu* or vegetable garden adjoining the field hut.
- (viii) Sowing seeds, viz. paddy, white and red, maize, etc. in March and April.
- (ix) Merry-making by celebrating *Moatsu*-the festival of the land—for six days.
- (x) Weeding—for two to three days.
- (xi) Watching for the protection of crops.
- (xii) Rites performed at the time of harvesting at *aphu* (place of worship in front of the field house).

Mills (1926: 122) gave an account of *tenten* ceremony in which the priest remains in *genna* for six days. (Genna restrains the village or an individual from work and keeps him isolated. It is, however, not observed now.)

- (xiii) Harvesting.
- (xiv) Storing in granaries which are constructed away from the dwelling houses, in October and November.

The study of an Ao Naga village (Ao, Alamchiba:1966) reflects that about 5,108 sq. km. area is annually brought under shifting cultivation whereas the area under wet cultivation, by terracing the field is only about 2.5 acres. In addition about 20 acres of land are under orange grove and betel leaf groves. Again about 10.36 sq. km. are under bamboo and palm groves. When asked why the people of the village mainly depend on shifting cultivation, most of them commented that the nature of terrain was unfit for wet or terrace cultivation. They also complained that rivers are so deep that it is difficult to construct irrigation channels. The villagers appeared to be conscious of the benefit of terrace cultivation and, according to them, technological, economic and security factors are the only consideration for not adopting it.



POUNDING AWAY TO GLORY :
A *Miri* woman husking rice.

COSTUMES GALORE : Khasi folk in festival attire.



FORTUNES FAVOUR THE BRAVE :
A warrior of *Idu Mishmi* tribe



A NEW BEGINNING : A Naga bride



*MAKE IT ALL WHILE SUN SHINES :
A Khasi girl selling fruits in market.*

The actual time of activities connected with the shifting cultivation were reported from the Ao village on the basis of the actual operations undertaken in the five households. These can be given in a tabular form as follows:

Actual Time of Activities Connected with Shifting Cultivation

Nature of Activity	Time when undertaken	No. of households undertaken
Jungle Cutting	First week of January	5
Burning	(a) First week of March	2
	(b) Second week of March	3
Sowing	(a) 3rd week of March	1
	(b) First week of April	3
	(c) Second week of April	1
Weeding	(a) Second week of May	1
	(b) First week of June	1
	(c) First week of July	1
	(d) First week of August	1
Harvesting	(a) First week of August	1
	(b) Third week of August	3
	(c) First week of September	1

The operations connected with the clearance of jungle are generally carried on by the members of the family. Both men and women are engaged in the work, but men are more efficient in this operation. The bushes and the shrubs are cut by the women with *daos* and the bigger trees are felled by the menfolk with axe or *dao*. During the jungle clearing operation the male members sometimes sleep in the temporary hut constructed in the field. The womenfolk return home to look after the children.

The sowing of paddy by the broadcast method is generally carried out by the women folk of the family but the menfolk also take part. Sowing of other crops by digging holes are done by both the menfolk and the womenfolk of the family.

The weeding operation is quite strenuous and time-consuming. It is carried out by many members at a time. Their paid labourers for this purpose receive paddy filled up in a basket called *Changkutmelok*, as wage per day. About 2.27 kg. is contained in such a basket. Generally only women undertake such labour. The poorer people frequently do not engage labourers on wage basis. A number of friends and relatives combine to form a reciprocal labour group and work in each others field by turn. On the day the work is done on a particular field, the owner of the field is required to serve mid-day meals to all.

Like weeding, the reaping operation also is generally done on a mutual aid basis. After the date is fixed the man calls his friends and relatives, specially brothers-in-law and nephews, to come to his aid. A pig is killed on that day. The relatives who arrive early in the morning share the cooked intestine and stomach of the pig in the house and the rest of the meat is taken to the field to be served as a mid-day meal.

The various operations mentioned above are associated with a series of socio-religious performances. Before starting the operation of jungle clearance a fowl or an egg is sacrificed and they offer prayer for good crops and for protection against injuries and sickness. While the Jhum is set on fire a ceremony called *Phujung* is observed by offering a fowl. Besides this, every person used to observe six days *genna* during the burning operation. It is said that such *genna* is now not observed even by the non-Christians. The sowing of paddy is also marked by the sacrifice of a fowl by cutting the throat with a sharp bamboo knife. After the work of sowing is over all the villagers irrespective of their religion come together to celebrate the greatest festival of the land *moatsu* for six days. It is quite a colourful festival. A similar colourful religious ceremony is performed at the time of harvesting.

During the elaborate agricultural operation the Naga use a number of tools and implements which will need our detailed description elsewhere. Some of these tools are mentioned below.

Hoe—It consists of an iron blade with straight cutting edge and is fitted at about 60° angle to a bamboo handle. It is used for digging and turning soil.

Sickle—It consists of a crescent shaped serrated iron blade the posterior portion of which is fitted to a short cane handle. It is used for reaping the stalk of the plant.

Billhook—It has an iron blade and a handle. The iron blade is about 25 cm. in length with more or less straight back and straight top, at right angle to the axis of the blade. It is about 9 cm. broad at the anterior end and gradually narrows down to 6 cm. at the posterior end, where the tang is inserted through a ferrule to a bamboo handle, which is 31 cm. in length and has a diameter of 3.5 cm.

Iron-scraper—It is an iron loop, the two narrow ends of which are tied with two crosswise fitted bamboo sticks. These bamboo sticks form the handles. This tool is used for scraping weeds.

Digging stick—It is an iron blade with sharp broad working edge; the narrow posterior portion is fitted to a piece of bamboo which serves as the handle. It is used for digging of soil.

Axe—It is an iron blade with sharp slightly convex working edge; the posterior portion is fitted to a piece of bamboo which serves as the handle. It is used for cutting trees.

Bamboo basket—It is used for storage.

Winnowing fan—It is used for winnowing of grains.

These tools are very simple and primitive and are made in the village itself. Some of these tools are of old type and some are new.

The Rengma Nagas (Mills, 1937:75-86) work in their own jhum field. If a Rengma Naga does not own any land he rents a piece and farms for the year. It is rare to find a Rengma making his living by working for others. The only exception to this is the old people, the sick (at the beginning of felling trees) and a few lazy individuals. However, communal labour for hoeing or weeding or harvesting on a reciprocal basis is needed. Field companies, consisting of a boy and a girl of same age, usually inhabitants of the same *Khel* (a village block), are common and at times they stay in the field company for life. A company may be made of 20 or 30 strong young persons of the same or different clans. More usually, the company works in the field of each of its members in turn. A big farmer may hire a company for the day, feed them in return and give them some rice for the evening meal and storing.

Jhuming is done in phases. First, the plot of forest is selected. After one day's *genna* observation, the forest patch is cleared, wood allowed to dry, and the *zu kuli* ceremony of purification performed before it is burnt. The field hut is constructed. *Nadu Goling* is prayed to, the crop sown and a *genna* to mark the end of sowing is observed. The field is watched from the field hut, and the ritual for warding off pests is performed. Next the field is weeded, the first fruit ceremony observed, harvesting done and finally merry making in *Ngada* festival at the close of the agricultural year is observed.

All suitable land in the Rengma area was taken up generations ago and lies fallow under secondary jungle on six to twelve years rotation. Ordinarily, two to three crops are taken from a plot of land before it is discarded. A *Khel* or whole village owns a particular jhum field in the same area in one block for easy approach, labour saving and easy watching. The staple crop—rice, millets, taro, cotton, chillis, ginger, oilseeds, etc.—are also grown.

Jhuming, which was the only means of cultivation in the past, has now been partly replaced by wet rice cultivation. This has been possible with the growing interest in the new technique, reinforced with financial incentives and technical aid to the Jhumias from the government.

The Mao Nagas of the Northern Manipur now practise terrace cultivation and to a lesser extent Jhum cultivation. Every family has a kitchen-garden also. They produce potato, cabbage, sesame, tomato, squash, etc..

The Mao Nagas has both individual terrace fields, Jhum land and forests as well as community land, grazing land and forests.

In the Purums of Manipur (Das, 1945: 53-62) all the villagers do not prepare their Jhums in the same area as the Nagas do not select sites at random. Generally, the Jhum land lies around the village. When the annually available jhum land falls short of the requirements of the village, ordinarily a group of villagers is sent away. Among the villagers anyone may select a particular plot from the village Jhum land. A Jhum land may be cultivated for four succeeding years at the utmost after which it is allowed to lie fallow for about ten years. The jhum cycle starts with the selection of site and clearing of the jungle in *Phatrel* (February-March), and allowed to dry and be fired in April. The worship of *Nung Chungha* after felling is the beginning of religious activities of the agricultural operation. Sowing by broadcast is done in *Kalel* (May-June) when rains are expected and weeding carried out in *Inga* (June-July) and *Thaoal* (August-September). Before harvesting, worship of *Saduhong* is performed when the paddy stalks have made their appearance in *Mera* (October-November). Just before harvesting also in *Mera* the first fruits of the year are offered to *Senamahi*. Clearing and storing are the final phase of their Jhumming.

The 'Kukis' inhabiting almost all the North-Eastern States, particularly Manipur, cultivate rice and cotton. Their rice is of a superior quality. Their cotton is also of a very fine quality. From their cotton they make yarn and weave clothes. They did not depend on market supply even during 1840. The women, besides making garments, grow tobacco, sugarcane, tapioca, ginger, bean, millet, maize etc.

They are also fond of hunting and fishing. They particularly hunt for tusker elephants but the tusk of the elephant killed always goes to the chief. Tiger, bison, bear, stag, wild boars are always priced games. (Changsan: 1984).

In Arunachal Pradesh the *Adi-Arik* (Jhum or Shifting shifting cultivation) of land use is widely prevalent and its different patterns have been described by the anthropologists in the

monographs prepared by the Arunachal Pradesh administration. The *Adi-Arik* fields of the villages are situated on the slopes of the surrounding hills at varying distances from the settled areas. A typical Jhum field has three distinguishing features as observed in lower Siang District (Lall and Das Gupta: 1979). First, Jhum fields which are ready for the sowing; such fields are cleared of all the forest growth except a few trunks left here and there in the Jhum field. One or two elementary farm hunts are noticed in the Jhum fields. The number of huts show the number of households owning the particular patch of Jhum fields. Individual field boundaries within the Jhum boundary are made by stones, bamboos and the unburnt tree trunks.

The second distinguishing feature of the Jhum field is the fallow land left for regeneration of vegetation. They lie mostly adjacent to Jhum field under cultivation. Such fallow land is full of grasses, bushes and small trees.

The third type is a fully regenerated Jhum field. It has tall and thick trees. The under growth is thick and due to huge accumulation of humus, the colour of soil has turned black. Such fields are likely to be opened for cultivation. There may be a number of regenerated plots in the village out of which a few are opened. Sometimes the second year Jhum and the first year Jhum are found adjacent to each other and form a mosaic pattern in the slopes of the hill.

Terrace Cultivation

In addition to the Jhum cultivation the terrace cultivation has also become familiar to certain sections of the tribes in North-Eastern India. The Angamis are the most advanced among the Nagas for terrace cultivation. The implements used for terracing used to be digging sticks with the iron blades and the sickle. But now there has been changes in the implements of terrace cultivation. They have, at present, different types of spades, they use fork-spade for clearing the grasses. They use a kind of "dao" called *podanes*, for cutting the surface of a terrace during plantation. It has a one and half feet long iron blade which can be worked from both sides. *Kedze* is an implement for thrashing paddy. It is two to two and a half feet long.

Recent researches in the Zeliang village of Samzuaram in the Zulki block revealed, in addition to Jhum terrace plough cultivation is also practised on a small scale. The Zeliang borrow tracts of plough from the Manipuria. They originally used buffaloes for ploughing but since the last four decades they have started the use of oxen. As regards agricultural implements they use grass cleaners and levellers made of iron. Besides they use sickle with sharp curved toothed working ends. The Zeliang thrashing implements called *Shaiba* is three and a half feet long. It is made of a branch of a tree. They also use an implement called *Kazao* after thrashing to clean the dust from the paddy made of bamboo sticks. It is two feet long and one and a half feet in width. In the wet cultivation (*Pani Kheti*), paddy is the only crop which is grown twice in a year in summer and winter.

Cultivation in Mizoram

In the State about 80 per cent of the population derive their sustenance from agricultural and allied activities. The main form of agriculture is Jhumming or shifting cultivation. In certain areas wet rice cultivation has started. A sizeable portion of the population are also engaged in

government services, trade or commerce, construction of road and building and similar activities. The occupational Distribution Pattern in respect of the rural areas of three districts of Mizoram (viz. Aizawl, Lunglei and Chhimtuipai) is given on next page.

To conclude, for the last three decades, although much emphasis has been laid on conversion of shifting cultivation to settled cultivation, yet, considering the terrain the major cultivable area will continue to be under shifting cultivation until new economic measures are adopted in this hilly region. In fact, the process of conversion should be restricted to certain selected regions and efforts should be made to introduce scientific Jhumming in selected areas. Against this backdrop, the Jhum Land Regulation of 1947 has some relevance. This Act recognises the right of a village or a community to Jhum land if the land in question has been enjoyed for not less than five years before the enactment of this Regulation. Thus a village or a community has sentimental as well as traditional customary attachment to a certain plot of land inside a village and while introducing new agricultural techniques this aspect should be taken into consideration.

Chapter VI

Art and Crafts

Art plays an important role in man's life and society. Herbert Read, emphasising the importance of art, has gone to the extent of observing:

"I believe that our vitality as a people is intimately connected with the expression of the sense of beauty. A sense of beauty is nothing but a sense of quality, and if as a people we have lost the sense of quality we are finished" (quoted from Elwin: 1959).

It seems that art and human life have been inseparable and art is old as the human existence. The earliest evidence of man's achievement in the field of art finds expression in the cave art of the upper palaeolithic periods in Europe 30,000 and 60,000 years ago (Culican, W.: 1974). The earliest known example of something definable as art, dates from the appearance of Cromagnon man (*Homosapiens*) in the last glacial and post-glacial phases of the palaeolithic period. The palaeolithic hunters, gatherers and fishermen made great cultural progress during the upper palaeolithic period. The hand-axes and flake tools of the earlier assemblages were replaced by diversified and specialised tools made on blades struck from specially prepared cores. Many important inventions appeared in the field of art. Special mention may be made of needles and thread, skin-clothings, stone and bone tools with handle, the harpoon, the spear-thrower and fishing equipments. The earliest man-made dwellings consisting of semi-subterranean pit houses, are found in this period. Of prime importance and interest is the beginning of the basic techniques of drawing, modelling, sculpturing and painting as well as the earliest manifestations of dancing, music, the use of masks, ceremonies and the organization of society into patterns that were apparently fairly complex (Culian, W.: 1974)

The people of North-East India who live in hilly, forested and scenic habitat of rivers and valleys also reflect high accomplishment in the fields of art and crafts. The expression of art in the tribal societies of North-East India has a wider span and implications. The media of artistic expressions are varied and unique. Not only anthropologists and art historians but even enlightened publicmen have been greatly impressed by the rich heritage of art of the people of the North-East India. Jawaharlal Nehru always emphasised the importance of encouraging and preserving the art of the hill peoples of India.

"I am anxious that they should advance, but I have been more anxious that they should not lose their artistry and joy in life and the culture that distinguishes them in many ways" (Quoted from Elwin: 1959).

He strongly felt all over the world the impact of modern westernised civilization has destroyed the creative impulse in pre-literate population and has given little in its place.

Elwin (1959) and Alemchiba (1968) have made special study of the art of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland respectively. Several monographs on the tribes of North-East India written by the British administrators and contemporary anthropologists also made profuse references about

the rich artistic accomplishment of the people of this region. Even to a layman the artistic weaving designs of the colourful dresses, the accomplished wood carving, the varied types of materials made of the canes and the bamboos, the unique cane bridges on the turbulent rivers, the hand-made painted potteries, their wooden and bamboo-made homesteads as well as the varied types of agricultural implements used particularly for shifting-cultivation—all create an impressive impression about the artistic people of the North-East India. In spite of geographically handicap situations, the non-availability of materials, the poor and primitive technology, the absence of market and patronage, and, above all certain taboos and traditions hindering the free use of artistic skill the brave men and women of the North-East India continue to maintain the perennial flow of artistic current in the remotest corners of the hills and forests. Elwin rightly comments that there is much beauty to be found in the art of the North-Eastern frontier but to appreciate it require sympathy, imagination and the ability to relate it to its human background. It would be my endeavour to throw sidelights on some of the important pieces of art which find expression of their imaginative and artistic qualities. These pieces of art and craft can be classified froms several angles: The use of raw materials such as wood, cane, bamboo, cotton, metal, stone. These, again, may be classified in terms of their functional use: the hunting tool, the agricultural tool, the household belongings including the containers. For the purposes of cloting the North Eastern tribes have taken up the handloom and prepare colourful textiles for their dresses. The varied types of baskets, winnowing fans, bamboo mugs, bow and arrows are universally prepared and used by the people of North-East India. These pieces of art produced out of varied raw materials for varied purposes may be discussed conveniently under following heads, considering in order of their universality and popularity in the region.

1. Weaving and textile	4. Pottery: The art of pot making
2. Wood work	5. Metal works
3. Basketry and cane goods	6. House type and decoration.

SPINNING, WEAVING AND TEXTILE

In spite of primitive technology and poor economic econditions the North-East India is rich in spinning, dyeing and weaving which are primarily controlled by the womenfolk. The Naga clothes which are so varied and rich in design not only serve the bare necessities of life but also reflect the socio-political status and the ritual significance from the very design of the bearers. The textile weaving, however, varies from tribe to tribe. While it has been very rich among the Naga tribes, in Arunachal Pradesh it is comparatively limited among the Adi, the Mishmi, the Apa Tani and the Buddhist tribes. In Meghalaya the Garo weave their own clothes. The Garo women are expert in weaving the *dakmandas* (2 metre X 1 metre) which is a shawl worn by the womenfolk. The *dakmandas* is beautifully decorated with their own indigenous designs and the colour schemes. The designs consist of depiction of butterflies and local flowers.

The Khasi and the Jaintia are said to have certain original designs in handloom fabric which, unfortunately, have considerably declined. The Khasi prepare textiles out of pineapple fibres. These rough fibres are generally used for making bags. The men folk grow cotton in their field which is used for preparing thread and eventually clothes of different designs by the Mikir women. The Mikir women dye their thread with indigo and commonly the cloth which they use is of red dye, which is very popular.

In Assam, the Cachari are expert in rearing indigenous variety of cocoon which is used for manufacturing Assam silk. The cloth popularly known as *ericlothe* is used during the cold

season. These clothes prepared by the Cachari are soft and warm as well as of remarkable strength and durability. The Cachari women also use floral designs.

The Manipuri are also well-known for their art of weaving and preparing colourful dresses. Their looms are of loyn type. The Manipuri women are familiar with the process of dyeing with the help of some plants and some varieties of clay. The use of a kind of clay found on the hills is named *Kaina* which yield bright yellow colour. In general, the Manipuri textile is characterised, traditionally, with geometric design.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

In Arunachal the textile is relatively not as well-developed as in the case of Nagaland and Manipur. The textile patterns found among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, such as Adi, Mishmi and Apa Tani, are invariably of geometric pattern. Most popular motifs are zig zag lines and angular designs. The floral and zemorphic patterns are more or less in geometric form. The simple and straight lines, stripic and Aa bands and similar other patterns are most common. Contrasts and combination of colours are quite popular. It has been remarked that the "Primitive preoccupation with geometric order may reflect the intricate systematic structure of social and religious concepts among the tribes and it is perhaps significant that the highly disciplined Adi and Apa Tani concentrate on simple straight line, while the strongly individualistic Mishmis go in for great elaboration of pattern" (Elwin 1958: 36).

The Adi have a great variety of straight-forward patterns. There are arrangements of red and black strips on a white ground, white and yellow strips on a black ground, alternate bands of red and black or of olive green and brown, broad border-bands of brown with a central narrow strips of black and white. The body of the cloth being black with brown black and white strips at a three-inch interval.

The Gallong still continue the traditional design on the white clothes with a broad rectangular design across the centre. The most popular Padam Minyong skirt is of crimson or yellow colour with a vertical band which runs down the centre. The different varieties of bands and colour make the Apa Tani cloth different from that of the Gallong. The Mishmi weaving is, however, more elaborate through the straight line and band are in use.

The colours and designs have their symbolic meaning among some of the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. In Tuensang the small red squares on a sanctum cloth are said to represent the ferment used in making rice-beer. Sharply pointed triangles are arrows or hornbills. Circles of Cowrie stretched on a cloth symbolise human heads. The red colour of the shawls is explained as standing for the blood enemies, blue stand for the sky and black for the night.

The use of certain kinds of clothes and ornaments is often associated to a family's social position and achievements in the fields of hospitality and war. The Apa Tani priests may wear special shawl on ceremonial occasion. This shawl with extraordinary design is said to have special supernatural power. One can know about the civil status of a girl from the type of belt she wears. The unmarried Adi girl wears one type of belt. Married women wear another. The Sherdukpens and Hrusso aristocracy alone can wear the Tibetan knobbed hat and in the past there were restrictions on the use of silk among the Monpas.

The Wanchoos allow only members of the chiefs' family to wear a certain type of blue head on the arms and legs and have special design for their head bands. In Tuensang the dress protocol

has great importance specially because, in the past, man's social position depended on his success in head-hunting and in giving feasts of merit.

Though there has not been much external influence on the design of the fabrics in Arunachal Pradesh there has been some borrowing of motifs from the neighbouring areas. In western Kameng, for example, the influence of Bhutan and Tibet is evident in many of the products of the Monpa loom. Again, Monpa painting is largely Tibetan in subject and technique. Aeroplanes are now familiar objects all over the frontier and they appear in some recent Mishmi textiles.

In Nagaland there is abundance of cotton as well as of skill to make the textiles. Cotton is grown in plenty in the villages on the lower hills. Originally Naga clothes were made of entirely local materials. Such local cotton is grown specially by the Lhota, the Rengma and the Ao. These cotton growers even used to sell the raw materials to the neighbouring tribes. In recent years, however, mill-made yarn is readily available in the local market at cheaper rate. In the light of these developments the indigenous spinning is fast losing its importance while weaving is becoming more popular than before. with the extension of markets, again, new designs, new items with varied patterns have been introduced.

The Naga modes of processing cotton, the spinning and the weaving are simple and to some extent primitive. The motifs, designs and pattern, however are quite complex and their symbolic meanings and usages are rather significant. The elaborate processes of spinning, dyeing and finally weaving remind us of the rich scientific discoveries by the headhunters of the Naga hills, particularly of their women who are supposed to weave the clothes for their respective families.

The work of seed-cleaning is a tedious process which is done either by the old women or by a cotton ginning machine consisting of two wooden rollers geared to revolve in opposite directions and turn by a crack with the right hand. The clean cotton is gently rolled by hand with the help of round stick over a flat stone or plank into sausages. This cotton is ready to be spun into thread with the help of a primitive Naga spindle. The Naga spindle consists of a pin of bamboo sticks tapering into a fine point at the top and about the thickness of a pencil near the bottom.

Once the threads are ready into yarn the dyeing process takes place after the yarn is transferred into skeins. Most common method of dyeing among the Rengma is to thoroughly boil the leaf and a thick layer of them, is put at the bottom of a pot. The Lotha method of preparation and the use of dark blue dye is to powder the leaves and boil them with water. The thread is dipped in the mixture for half an hour and is then dried. Dyeing of clothes or threads is exclusively performed by women and during this period it has been reported that "they must refrain from sexual intercourse and must not eat beef, dog flesh, goatflesh, dried fish and other food with strong smell". (Alemchiba: 1968:9).

The different tribes of the Nagas have slightly different method of making the different types of dyes. One of the commonest Naga method of preparation of blue dye is to boil the leaves in water in a big pot, the clothes or thread to be dyed are dipped in it and boiled for nearly an hour. It is then taken out and dried in the sun. When the colour does not take the desired proportion, the process is repeated. The selection of colour in dyeing operation, again, is backed by certain beliefs. The red colour being of blood, if used by a young woman is superstitiously believed to die a violent death or lose her head in a raid. Owing to this belief only old women dye a yarn in the red colour. The Angami prepare red dye from the root of a local creeper *Tsenyhu*. The Ao obtain the red dye from the root of another creeper *Aozu*. Yellow dye is rather in disuse. The Angami,

however, prepare it from the wood of a plant *Athuor*. The dyeing process is restricted before harvest, under the belief that the process in some way is detrimental to crops.

Weaving in Nagaland unlike other parts of India is the exclusive monopoly of the women. Once the first fruit of the new rice is eaten by the Naga women the Naga looms are thrown in action. The Naga loom, said to be as Indonesian tension loom, is a simple and inexpensive wooden machine to be handled by a single woman. In some cases, however, for the purposes of warping, the help of another person may be required. Considering the simple operation it takes a period of about ten hours for a weaver to complete the plain strip or about thirty hours to weave a complete cloth. The weaving of clothes with decorative design takes double or even more time depending upon the nature of the design. The designing is mostly done by using different stages or by the extra *west* meaning method (Alemchiba, 1968: 17).

The Nagas are famous for their shawls in which three pieces are woven separately and stitched together. The central strip is more decorated than the two others which generally have more or less the same pattern. Naga shawls range from a very simple white cloth to the elaborately designed warrier or rich man's shawls. Different Naga tribes have different shawls of their own design and within the same tribe everybody is not allowed to wear any type of shawl by choice.

There are several variety of clothes worn by the Angamis. The predominant pattern being white with red and black bands called *Laramgoushil* and black with red and yellow bands called *Lohe*. There is another white cloth with black and red border which may only be worn by men who have a high social standing owing to the number of *gennas* (taboos) of a semi-public nature performed by them. The chief shawl used by men and women for a rough wear is a black shawl called *Ratapfe*.

Similarly, among the Ao, the most decorative and the most difficult to earn the right to wear it is *Rangsü* shawl. It is worn only by a man whose grandfather and father have both done the Mithun sacrifice feast.

The *Tsungkotepsu* is one of the most characteristic shawls of the Ao which is a decorative war rich shawl. The Ao skirts consist of a cloth nearly one and a quarter metre long and about two-thirds of a metre wrapped round the waist with the top outer corner tucked in just in front of the left hip.

The prevailing pattern of Sema cloth is black with a border of 3 or 4 red bands 3 cms. wide along each side of the cloth. The distinguished warrier wear a cloth called *avi-kiyi-phi*. The decorative shawl can also be worn by those rich Sema who have offered the feast of merit by killing Mithuns. The ordinary clothes commonly worn by Sema women and girls without any restriction is called *lotutsu*. The cloth on a black base has three horizontal narrow white bands.

It has been reported that the Yimchunger Naga has more than 12 kinds of clothes. The commonest being a black shawl *aneakkhim*. Among the Phom Naga clothes are also classified on the basis of social status of the wearers. The ordinary cloth for rough wear may be a white one which they call *Viheashak*. A man who has taken human head in a war or has offered the 'feast of merit' as a recognition of his wealth in his village may wear a *Cowri* shawl called by the Phom *fanet*. The Phom women wear a skirt of black cloth with two prominent and parallel strips in each of which there are five narrow red lines nearly three cms. apart.

The Zeliang, a mixed group of Zemia Liangmais and others have clothes which do not basically differ from those of the Angami. The general pattern is a white cloth with six black bands at both edges.

Taken on the whole, then, the traditional Naga have innumerable varieties of shawls, skirts and other clothes with varied length and breadth, the designs and colours and their combinations. These colour combinations and patterns are backed with symbolic meaning and social significance. While it is not possible to go into the details of the skill and are reflected in the processes of dyeing, weaving and pattern and designing whatever, however, discussed here, brings to light the richness in textile that these so-called primitive 'head hunters' and the shifting cultivators have discovered and practised since times immemorial: In spite of the isolation and ecological imbalances, the North-East has been rich in the field of textile and its designs.

WOOD CARVING

Besides weaving the tribes of Arunachal particularly the Sherdukpen and the Monpa are experts in doing fine work in cane and bamboo making baskets of varied type including bottle containers of cane for water and liquor. In addition, these tribes in their own way are good carpenters and produce doors, windows, boxes, wooden sandals etc. But their best work is the manufacture of bowls, cups, plates and saucers. These are also painted with a number of design. The Sherdukpen, the Khamba, and the Monpas are famous for their artistic creation. They prepare ornate dresses and large number of masks, which appear almost like real faces, while others represent birds and animals and some represent apes and men with twisted mouths, women with goitre to drive away the evil spirit.

The masks are made of a single block of wood hollowed inside; holes are usually, but not always, made for eyes and mouths; most masks are painted, but older ones are generally found dark and discoloured. The paints are brought from Tibet or the Assam plains. Women never wear the mask, which are used only by men and boys and in Tawang, by Lamas themselves (Elwin: 58:75).

The Aka the Hrusso have a very fine poker work on slips of bamboos which are used as 'Sword' in weaving and sometimes to make 'Sheaths' for knieyes. Pipes, combs, bangles, and ear-plugs are also made and decorated in the same way. The Konyak and the Phom make tobacco-tubes of bamboos which have highly elegant designs. Their length varies from two half inches to three and a half inches.

Some of the finest wood carving in the entire state is to be found among the Wanchoo, Konyak and Phom tribes living close to the Burma border. These wood carvings find expression mainly under three categories; firstly, with head hunting, secondly with the decoration of the Morungs or men's youth dormitory and thirdly, the funerary images erected for warriors and other important persons. In carving of the human figure, chief attention is paid to the head. The features are carved in low relief and are fairly realistic. Usually they are of a warrior with special cowrie belt and other decorations typical of their own neighbouring tribes. The top of the heads are rounded and usually have some indication of haircut. Tattoo marks are carefully represented and most figures are dressed up with little bits of cloth and even ornaments with tufts on heads or beads in the ears.

Their Morungs are decorated for purposes of prestige and magic. Except the Sema, all the other tribes build Morung. In case of the Phoms, the Konyak, the Wancho, and the Nocte, the

Morung is the centre of male social life and all the young warriors sleep there at night. Thought the pattern of architecture of the Morung varies, they are generally large and imposing with a great porch above which rises a sloping roof.

The main pillars of the roof and the great horizontal beam are full of carvings of Mithun heads, carved tiger, elephants etc. Warriors with their guns, tigers, monkeys, dogs, dancing couples, tigers eating the moon are common among the carvings. Elwin reports that among the Konyak Morung there are a number of exotic motifs; representation of men and women and even of dogs in state of copulation. He found a fine carving of man and women lying together at Chie (P. 140).

The funerary sculptures and carvings are immense. Formerly the Angami made wooden effigies for their dead, and the Wancho, Konyak and Phom still do so. The Mortuary arts, Elwin remarks "are generally crude as if the artist was looking over his shoulder for fear of the Ghost and was in a hurry to finish his work and get away". In some cases, the images are not made of wood, but of basket work and placed in an open thatched hut.

In general, a great deal of wood carving of the Naga is associated with religious beliefs and practices. But under the impact of modernization and Christianity the art of wood carving is gradually vanishing.

CANE AND BAMBOO

Basketry among the Nagas is highly developed. They produce baskets of very fine designs for various purposes. The Angami are rather experts in producing several varieties of bamboo and cane works. Baskets are of all shapes and sizes from the rough little simple designs prepared in a few minutes into a complicated pattern, carefully woven baskets for carrying rice, or keeping wine bottles.

There are no professional basket-makers. Every man produces baskets for his own domestic use. In addition to such basket work among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh canes have been used for making suspension bridges. In general, it has been rightly said that Naga and most of the other important tribes of North-East India start life "in a cradle of bamboo and ends in a coffin of bamboo".

There are various stages involved in the preparation of baskets and other cane goods. It begins in the collection of raw materials from the forest, making of splints of necessary sizes, weaving of the basket and finally giving the finishing touches.

Weaving is the final stage which begins with the base, and then the very net of the weft and warp are turned perpendicular in order to prepare the walls of the basket. In doing so the shape and size of the basket is taken into consideration.

Among the Naga, the bamboo and cane work have given way to the preparation of cane furniture. They, now, prepare different kinds of armchairs, sofas, tables, and *jhulas* for babies. The best Adi cane work is seen in the making of a variety of hats. It is a common and popular handicraft in almost all parts of North-East India where canes and bamboos are in abundance. As the product is market oriented, a group of specialists have emerged in several villages. The State Governments have also established several training centres for such bamboo and cane work.

Along with the cane and bamboo work the introduction of plastic in these products is also significant:

POTTERY

The Nagas and few other tribes continue to practice to make earthen pots by hands alone, without wheel. Pottery among the Nagas like the Nicobarese of Chawra island is exclusively the art of the women. Unlike the bamboo work the pots are produced only by a few persons in a few villages.

The women make different types of functional pots with patience with the locally available sticky, plastic, light brown clay. Some pots when finished are given handles ordinarily. The size of the pots meant for cooking is generally small but others meant for storing rice, paddy etc. are very large.

Firing of pots is a tricky affair. Every possible precaution is taken against the outbreak of fire which is a common feature in the Naga village. In general, firing of pots is done outside the village at about sunset or early morning when fire could be easily controlled.

There are only few families of potters in Arunachal Pradesh. Pottery, however, is being developed in several cottage industries centres like Bomdila and others.

BLACKSMITHY

Compared to other crafts blacksmithy is a newcomer in North-East India. There continues to be the absence of iron smelting, but smithy is scattered all over Nagaland and other parts of North-East India. The Lotha, though practice smithy, regard it as a very unlucky one and believe that no blacksmith lives long after he stops the work. Like pottery this craft is restricted to the selected families and unlike potters it is practised only by the menfolk.

It has been reported that two forms of bellows are found in Nagaland. The first one which is widely used by all the tribes is the typical Indonesian bellow made of two vertical bamboo cylinders with feather pistons. The other form of bellow found commonly among the Ao tribe is made of single wooden cylinder placed horizontally and in which a single piston is used. The blacksmith's anvil is a large flat stone about one metre long, 60 cm. wide and 30 cm. thick, collected from the river side. Now iron anvils are used by many blacksmiths. (Naga Institute of Culture: 88).

The principal articles manufactured by the Naga blacksmiths are agricultural implements like *dao*, axe, hoecraper, sickle and weapons like spearheads, butt arrow heads and muskets.

In a fieldwork conducted by the Department of Anthropology of Ranchi University on Material Culture in an Angami village, Jatsoma, near Kohima, it was found that the villagers prepare their own agricultural implements and they continue to use their traditional tools for the terrace cultivation. These implements as mentioned elsewhere are : the axe (*Merre*), the spade (*Kaju*), the mattock (*Sivii*), the hoe (*Saro*) and the sickle (*Zupfino*).

The Zeliang of Samzueram village in Jaluki block of Paro sub-division in Kohima however, also use modern equipment for their wet cultivation (*Pani Kheti*), as they live in the plains. The mode of cultivation, however, in both the cases persists to be traditional. There is, however, every

likelihood these young Zeliang will use modern devices for cultivation like tractors, pump sets, threshers etc. which they will borrow from their advance neighbours.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

The North Eastern tribes have certain peculiar and interesting traditional musical instruments. Among the Angami villages we come across three types of traditional musical instruments:

- (1) *Ubou* which is a typical Angami guitar. It is made of wooden handle and string of goat's skin.
- (2) *Theku* which is made of a piece of flat bamboos.
- (3) *Ketus* which is the Angami trumpet made from the dried and hollowed stem of a shrub. These are the three traditional musical instruments which are mostly used during the festivals. They now use guitar, drum, harmonium and *tabla*. Among the traditional musical instruments of the Zeliang mention may be made of one *Dhoma*, a traditional drum, and a kind of violin borrowed from Manipur.

Drum and guitar have become quite popular in the Zeliang village. In some cases the Zeliang boys play with the violin, *tabla* and other modern instruments which have found inroads owing to Christianity.

Architectural and material cultural skills of the tribes of North-East India are also reflected in their settlement pattern, house type, the household utensiles as well as their dress and ornaments.

THE VILLAGE PATTERN

Traditionally, a Naga village was rather small and was surrounded by 5 to 6 feet high boundary of stone slabs. Entrance to the village was primarily through a gate made of heavy wooden logs, which is closed during night. The front side of the gate was generally decorated by engraving of bison head, human figures and human heads. This feature is still well preserved in the Angami villages. But as head-hunting and inter-village attacks are no more practised, the functions of these gates have changed. Now, these gates are only for village decoration and not for protection. Except among the Angami, village gate is rarely seen. In case of a bigger village it is often divided into different *Khel* or hamlets. In Angami village there is a *Khel* gate like village entrance gate. In an Angami village there are raised platforms which are often 8 to 10 ft. high made of stone slabs. Traditionally, this is for watching and guarding the village. By now these platforms have become the resting and recreation place for villagers.

YOUTH DORMITORY

Traditionally, in each Naga village there was boys' and girls' dormitories but now these are disappearing or vanishing. In some Naga villages dormitory houses are found but these have become club house or some sort of school. The contemporary youth clubs and primary school have replaced the traditional functions of dormitories, and they are fast disappearing.

HOUSE TYPE

Traditionally, a Naga house is made up of wood, bamboo, mud and thatches. Walls are made of bamboo splits, wooden poles and plastered with mud, and roofed with thatches. The front side is

a little higher than backside. Generally there are four compartments or rooms including verandah which usually likes in front. The verandah is used to store wood, husked paddy, and agricultural implements. Next to it is store-cum-poultry room where they store paddy, keep baskets, paddy huskings and powdering implements and agricultural implements as well as rear chickens. Next to this is kitchen-cum-guest room. The last one is bed room.

While such traditional houses predominate in every Angami village, in case of the Zeliang, however, traditional houses are disappearing. Traditionally these houses are usually decorated with heads of animals bearing horns. Mithun (Bison) heads signify wealth in Naga societies.

Traditionally, richmen used to decorate the fronts of their houses with painted representations of men and women, of shields, of mithun, hornbill features and geometrical designs usually in forms of concentric circles. But nowadays it is very difficult to locate even a single house of this sort in Angami villages.

As regards the changing house patterns, both the Angami and the Zeliang houses are now roofed with C.I. sheets. Cemented buildings are also seen in both tribes and these are gradually increasing. Now there are windows in the traditional house too. These days kitchen, poultry and storehouses are mostly placed separately. Now the richmen's house is identified by windows having glass frame and modern furnitures on the verandah.

On the whole, it is quite evident that art belongs to the entire people, it has not yet become a monopoly of a few. It is fortunate for the tribals of the North East that it is highly rich in art and craft. The Government of India and the respective State Governments have recognised this and are doing everything to develop it. If change is needed, it may be done, but always along the lines of the people's 'own genius' and tradition. It is hoped, as Elwin observes, to bring more colour, more beauty, more variety into the hills, which in turn will inspire the world outside with some of its zest and freshness. It is, however, cautioned that as an attempt to 'improve', for example, the textile of Manipur which has deteriorated as they have grown more popular.

Chapter VII

Changing Cultural Scene

The area of our present study, the North-East India, had for a long time remained beyond the pale of civilization. Except the plains flooded by the mighty Brahmaputra and its tributaries, the rest of the region was virtually unknown to the world outside until about a little more than a century ago.

During the British period, and immediately after Independence, the entire region was one political unit called Greater Assam. Later on, for a variety of political and administrative reasons the region underwent several administrative changes, and finally the North-East was divided into seven separate units. But despite these divisions, the fact remains that all these are very similar in terms of ecology, economy, social systems, religion, value systems etc. It is just like the daughters of a family, who have been married off to different persons, but have a lot in common. The seven political units have also been popularly named as 'seven sisters'— a term which beautifully expresses the true characteristics of the culture of the region.

Not long ago, when one thought of North-East India, what really did one think of? Of mighty mountains and lofty peaks, of luxuriant forests, meandering rivers, rivulets and streams; of wild elephants, tigers, leopards and rhinoceros, of stealthily crouching ferocious people, wearing strange masks and uttering weird cries, out to hunt not animals but men, to collect not fruits but skulls; of naked people beating a drum around the fire on dark nights, a vision of virility, a sense of seclusion, a feeling of fear. One goes to the North-East today and what does one find? Mountains, rivers and forests, of course, but also Pucca roads, concrete houses, railways, airports, motor cars, cinema houses, schools and colleges, hospitals and factories, legislative assemblies, modern guns and guitars, colourful dresses and smiling and hospitable people. The contrast is vivid, and strikes one with almost a physical force. How did these happen?

There is no monosyllabic answer to the above question, but one of the most important ones is the exposure of this region to the rest of India and, thereby, to the rest of the world. Ever since the British came to this region, and particularly since Independence, the region has witnessed a sort of flurry it never experienced before. In terms of population alone, it grew by more than six and a half times in the last eight decades. Not all of this is natural population growth. Immigration accounts for a sizeable portion. These people, coming as they did from many parts of India, Bangladesh, Burma and Tibet, brought with them different cultures, styles of living, value systems, modes of cultivation etc. These also served as important stimuli for change.

SHIFTING CULTIVATION

The pressure of population growth caused stress on the subsistence technology of 'Jhum Cultivation' and strained the already meagre economic resources of the tribals of this region. Naturally, they had to look around, and adopt, such means as could provide greater security and stability, and hence greater importance was attached to the wet rice cultivation.



LOVE, LEARN AND SLEEP : A Lalung youth dormitory

EVEN THE SKY IS NOT THE LIMIT : Mizo girls in traditional dress





*WINDS OF CHANGE : Khasi children
in a school.*

*ADORNMENTS OF LIFE :
Khasi dress and ornaments*



In addition to the inner compulsions, there have been extraneous factors as well. With the growing awareness about ecology, and the important roles that it plays in Earth's well-being, there has been a loud clamour for the stoppage of Jhum cultivation altogether which, it is said, not only destroys the forests and sends many rare floral and faunal species on the path of extinction, but, in the long run, adversely affects those practising this mode of cultivation too. Consequently, different State Governments in North-East India have taken up several schemes to regulate and replace shifting cultivation. Moreover, the North-Eastern Council operating in this region with inter-state jurisdiction, has included in its development plan several projects of Land Capability Survey and Soil Survey in the hill areas. Researches on land utilization and crop pattern in the Jhumming areas are also being carried out.

The resettlement panacea, so generously administered by the Government for tribal development everywhere, was used in this region also. And, like the rest of the country, it has become a fiasco. Another scheme has been to introduce terrace cultivation. The Angami Nagas have been sedentary terrace cultivators for a long time. The Nagaland Government is implementing a programme to extend terrace cultivation in other areas also by providing subsidies to the farmers. In Meghalaya, the Khasis have taken to extensive potato cultivation in the terrace fields. In Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh also, the terrace cultivation is being introduced in larger areas. The same is true of Tripura also. Coffee and rubber plantations are also being encouraged in many Jhumming areas.

All this is changing the life of the North-East people. While on the one hand wet rice cultivation is more productive and hence brings greater security, on the other hand, its different *modus operandi* demands a change in social structure and conventional system also. These latter two have been adjusted to the Jhum cultivation for so long that they give rise to stresses, strains and conflicts. One of the most important problems that cropped up now is that of land tenure.

While the Jhum cultivators hold land as a common property of the village, allocating particular plots for Jhumming on a finaly basis in any given year, a shift to permanent settled cultivation requires private ownership of land. This destroys the main base of their existence which rests on communal cooperation and endangers the social security that all collective enterprises provide. This is changing the very fabric of social structure. The right of disposal of the land is a natural corollary to private holding. This has resulted in land alienation in almost all tribal and peasant communities of India. Whether or not it will happen in North-East also is a mute point at this stage, but it cannot be overlooked nevertheless.

Moreover, the land brought under terracing under the subsidy schemes has not been properly utilised. Due to rapid weed growth and loss of fertility, terrace cultivation in such land was abandoned. It is reported that the abandoned terrace lands in the Garo hills were later converted back to Jhumming (Borah and Goswami, 1977:46). Recently some of the shifting cultivators in North East have started earning by working as wage labourers in development work undertaken by the Government like road and bridge construction and employment in Government service. Some Jhum villages have good communication facilities and are resorting to settled cultivation, horticulture, animal husbandry and poultry. Jhumming in such villages is losing its importance as a major source of income.

As a contrast, the field studies in Meghalaya revealed that the Jhumias were paying more attention to Jhumming, by employing the greater part of their available manpower and skill, than to terrace cultivation. A few farmers undertook terrace cultivation only to keep possession of the

land. This is another confirmation that their mode of cultivation has deeper roots in the socio-religious life of the concerned tribes, and any efforts to wean them away must be preceded by careful education about other modes of cultivation, preferably through demonstration.

CHRISTIANIZATION

Wherever the European Powers, and later on Americans, spread their political and commercial tentacles, the Christian Mission accompanied them. So it was only natural that India, and later on North-East India, should draw their attention. And like everywhere else, the proselytization in this region too began through schools, hospitals and orphanages. The first male convert, Nidhiram, was a student of the Mission school at Sadiya and the first women, Thuka, was a student of the Orphan Institution at Nowgong (Estd. 1843). The two were married to each other in 1847. From 1846, the Orphan Institution became a fertile ground for recruits. While there were only four schools and only 85 church goers in 1851, the numbers had risen by 1856, to 74 and 1922 respectively. The Garos, who first became converts in large numbers, accounted for 875 out of 1922.

The number of converts went on increasing rapidly in all parts of North-East India. The membership of the Nagaland Baptist Church alone increased from 28,623 in 1941 to 88,378 in 1965, an increase of more than 300 per cent. According to the 1971 census, the Christian population in the North-East was more than 1.7 million or 9.12 per cent. The states of Nagaland (66.86 per cent), Meghalaya (46.94 per cent), Manipur (26 per cent) and Mizoram, (86.14 per cent) are the most Christianized in the North-East.

The schools, colleges and churches, opened by the Christian Missions, went a long way in changing the needs, as well as the perception of such needs, among the local people. They provided new ideas, elements of new culture and new ideologies. In many cases, the sudden void created at the ideological level due to a change in traditional Jhum cultivation was filled by Christianity. As one of the informants of Majumdar (1978, 150) says, "we have no rice to prepare rice beer, so we cannot perform *Amua* or *Krita* when somebody is ill in the house. Now that we have accepted Christianity, we do not need to perform such rites, we go to the doctor and bring medicine which is much cheaper than providing *Chu*. When some of our kinsmen visit us, we offer them a cup of tea, which costs little. We need not now offer *Chu* to them, even a small pot of which costs five or six rupees."

Governmental Efforts to Change

The most importance change have been caused by the Government efforts for their development. Since Independence, the Government of India has initiated a series of measures, taken many steps, which have now begun to bear fruit. We can view them under the following heads.

POLITICAL REORGANISATION

Between 1950 and 1972, a lot of changes took place in the political boundary in North-East India. The present Assam, a truncated name-sake of the original one, is now a land of non-tribals except the districts of North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong. As a result of vociferous,

sometime violent agitation, separate tribal states were carved out. In addition to the immediate effect of appeasing the tribal sentiment for self-administration, the political reorganisation also had a far-reaching effect in fostering a sense of unity among themselves, and inculcating a sense of responsibility into the nation as a whole. Here Nagaland is good example. Formerly, different groups of the Naga, whose loyalties lay only with their clans and villages, were engaged in fratricidal wars. Now, they have been united into a large, single body—the Naga inhabiting the Nagaland state. The same is true of other states also.

The political and judicial institutions that were introduced in the wake of these changes, transformed, to a considerable extent, the traditional structure of society. The concepts and institutions of king, warrior and Sardar have been rendered obsolete with increasing democratization. Even the Regional Autonomy guaranteed by the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India was based on democratic principles.

The Sixth Schedule, which allows for the formation of district councils to be run by educated persons from within the tribal communities themselves, did not have the desired results. It was hoped that people themselves would know, decide, formulate, and implement what was good for them. They were vested with legislative, judicial and executive powers with enough financial resources to carry out their plans. It was observed that most of the funds were spent on such administrative expenses like purchase of vehicles etc. far in excess of their needs, leaving very little welfare measures. The representatives in the council were novices and ill-equipped in the art of administration. Moreover the District Council itself was an innovative institution which could not effectively replace the traditional political structure at the village level. In fact, these became counter-productive in that they only increased the political aspirations of a larger number of people. It becomes clear from the fact that though the leaders were unable to, or unwilling to, exercise whatever powers were delegated to them, they began to demand separate statehood for each district, which they have achieved ultimately.

All this has at least left one effect—people have become politically more conscious and have developed a sense of self-respect and identity.

CIVIC FACILITIES

One of the important developmental efforts of the Government has resulted in building roads, bridges, and other means of communication. A great part of the North-East had remained inaccessible till before Independence. Only a few roads worth the name existed, connecting a handful of villages. Innumerable rivers and springs were formidable hurdles, luxuriant forests and steep hills even greater hinderances. Now most of the villages, and all the towns, are connected by metalled or non-metalled roads. A number of bridges have been constructed and this process is continuing. These have made markets more accessible for the local people, permitting greater contacts with the outside people, and leading, more often than not, to greater import of ideas, techniques and materials.

One of the most important vehicles of cultural transformations has been education. Like all remote and inaccessible places in the world, the opening of schools and colleges imparting modern education in this region also was pioneered by the Christian missions. English was the first language that many tribes came in contact with apart from their own. So much so, that the modern state Nagaland has adopted English as its officials language.

Since Government stepped in, there has been a great proliferation of educational institutions. Whereas, Nagaland had only one high school, and a few middle schools, in 1946, by 1966 there were 3 colleges, 31 high schools, 144 middle English schools, and 800 primary schools, in a state of 900 villages. These numbers have almost doubled since then. The whole of the North-East is teeming with educational institutions including those imparting technical education. A remarkable improvement has taken place in educational facilities in Tripura. There was an impressive increase in the number of schools and teachers. The total enrolment of students multiplied several times. New colleges including an Engineering College were started. Seeing the growing need of education in the North-East, a separate Central North-Eastern Hill University was started at Shillong and the other one is in offing for Arunachal Pradesh. Post-Graduate study centres have been established at Agartala, Imphal, Kohima etc.

The same is true of hospitals also. Most of the villages are now being served by health centres. And the fact is that the tribal people, who had traditionally been using jungle herbs as medicines, are now more and more inclined towards modern chemical drugs.

INDUSTRIALISATION

Rapid industrialisation is an important key to economic growth. North-East India can never be expected to achieve economic prosperity unless ways and means are found to promote industrial activity. The rapid growth of population in this region, the multiplication of the needs of the people and the creation of a growing class of educated people after independence made it imperative to create additional income and employment opportunities. But, the initial measures taken to achieve these did not make any noticeable impact. In Tripura, for example, industrial institutes were set up to provide training facilities in the First Plan period. During the Second and Third Plans the development of village and small-scale industries became the hallmarks of industrial development. There was an increase in the emphasis on village and cottage industries, special attention being paid to developmental activities in the handloom, sericulture, Khadi and village industries and handicraft sectors. Financial assistance to small industrial units was also given. In addition, a raw material depot was set up to ensure a regular supply of raw materials.

But the paucity of capital, deficiency in the power supply, scarcity of raw materials, transport and communication bottlenecks, and the absence of entrepreneurs rule out the possibility of broad-based industrialisation in the near future. However, there is enough scope for modest expansion and which is being taken care of. Industrial operations based on forest resources, development of agro-based industries like dairy and poultry farming, fruit-canning, rice-milling etc., and full utilisation of the scope for plantation industry are a few such avenues.

ART AND CRAFTS

As seen previously, the North-East culture had been self-sufficient for centuries, including such cottage industries as pottery, basketry, weaving, carpentry, blacksmithy etc. These were carried out within the household at the family level. The artisans and craftsmen were never idle.

The recent changes in the North-Eastern society has also affected these traditional occupations. The growing market economy and the easy availability of a number of manufactured articles have profoundly influenced these industries and the livelihood of the artisans. For example, the indigenous earthen pots have been substituted by aluminium and plastic ones. Enamel mugs and plates have replaced the old bamboo and wooden cups and

plates. The markets are flooded by denims and jeans, which are favoured by youths at the expense of home-woven clothes. Many skilled weavers are out of their traditional jobs because there is no demand for a particular type of shawl woven exclusively for a particular class of warrior or rich people, simply because the latter classes no longer exist. The cessation of inter-village warfare and head-hunting has made the creation of gates redundant. As a result, the art of wood carving has suffered. There is no need to prepare indigenous colours for dyeing the clothes because better chemical colour in greater variety is easily and cheaply available. A Naga, Khasi or Garo household almost invariably possesses factory-made furnitures. Transistors, radio-sets and cinemas are changing their perception of entertainment. Consequently, the age old songs and dances are dying out. In fact, a youth on a motorbike with his girl-friend on the pillion, singing English songs or dancing to the tunes of pop music, is a common sight in the entire North-East except, perhaps, Arunachal Pradesh.

RENAISSANCE

The all-round transformation of the North-East culture would have gone at much faster pace and the incorporation of new elements would have been incontrovertible, had there not been a nativistic revival—both springing from within and induced from without. With education and exposure came the awareness of the ways of the world, and consequent upon it was a new perspective for the old. The people of North-East India, after initially blindly following the western ideas, have now begun to see their own culture in a new light. Old traditions, customs and institutions are being re-interpreted and re-established. Political stability and the factors responsible for its continuity, has caused a new sense of identity. Aided by this and encouraged by the development agencies of the Government who place a premium on preserving the culture, the culture of the North-East is witnessing a renaissance. And nowhere is it more amply demonstrated than in the field of arts and crafts. There has been a growing emphasis on revitalising the other handicrafts like weaving, wood-carving, dyeing, basketry etc. And the best way to achieve it was its commercialisation. Efforts are being made to provide the artisans in scattered villages with raw materials with a guarantee of purchasing the finished products. They are also being instructed about new techniques. This has rejuvenated the dying arts of North-East India. New designs are being discovered in addition to the older ones for weaving. The North-Eastern Handicrafts Development Corporation is giving a new fillip in this direction. It is co-ordinating the development of arts and crafts at all levels—from the supply of raw materials to the artisans to the sale of finished products, through various outlets. Many of the local people and most of the women, particularly among the Nagas, are retaining their habits of wearing the hand-woven dresses. Many schools have adopted traditional dress as uniforms.

The North-Eastern culture is thus, in a flux and changing rapidly. At the same time efforts are being made to keep the changes along people's own genius and tradition. This is very important since although people readily adopt or adjust to the material changes, it is the psychological adjustment that counts. A people's psychological orientation and their cultural tradition are in harmony and any attempt at making any drastic change in either category necessarily causes stresses and strains which disrupts this harmony. This results in making the culture rootless.

In the light of the virtual extinction of native culture in different parts of the world, when exposed to western cultures, it is hoped that the rich traditions of the North-East people will not be allowed to wither away, and that people will change in such a way as to create prosperity and spiritual well-being.

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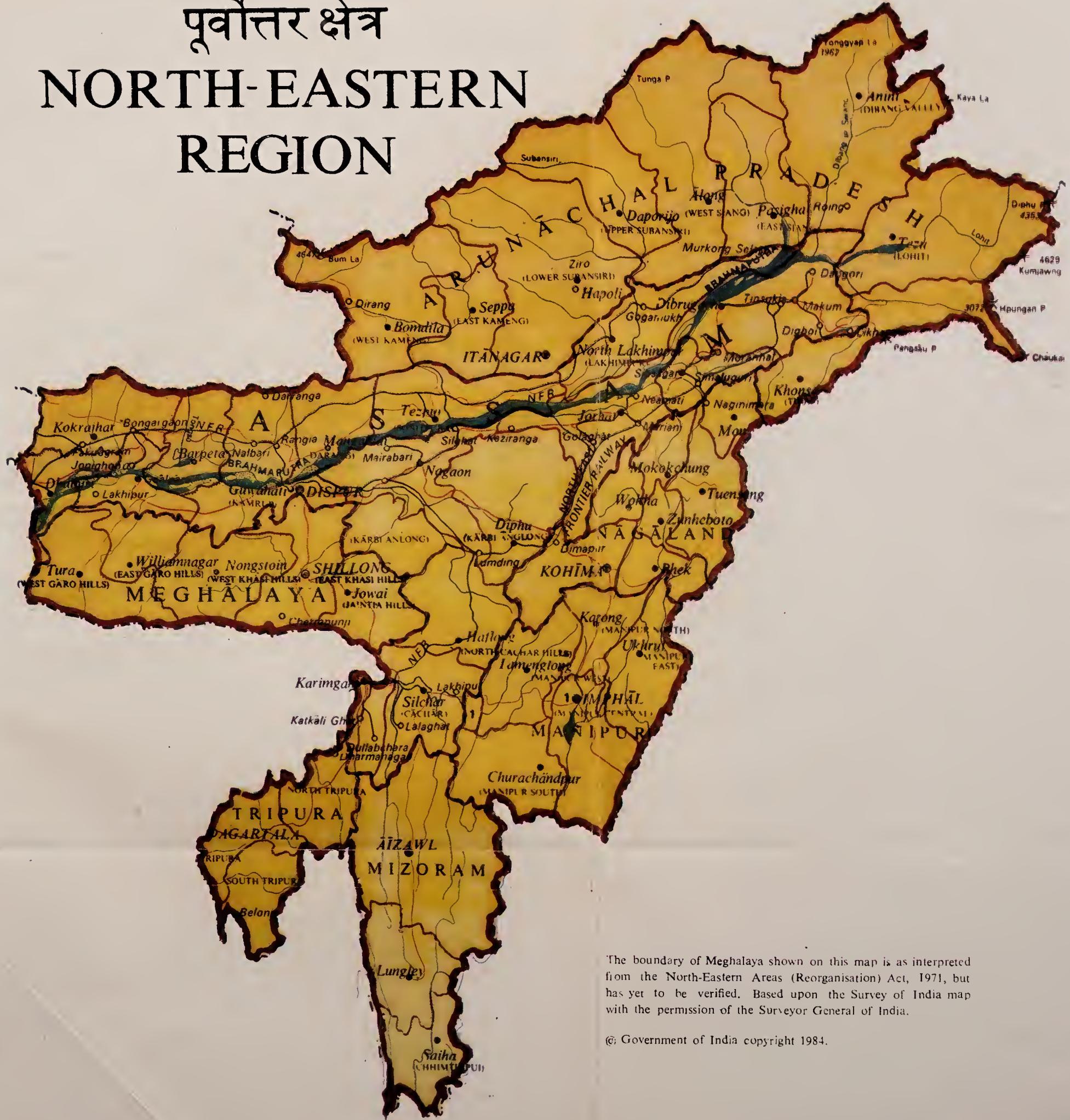
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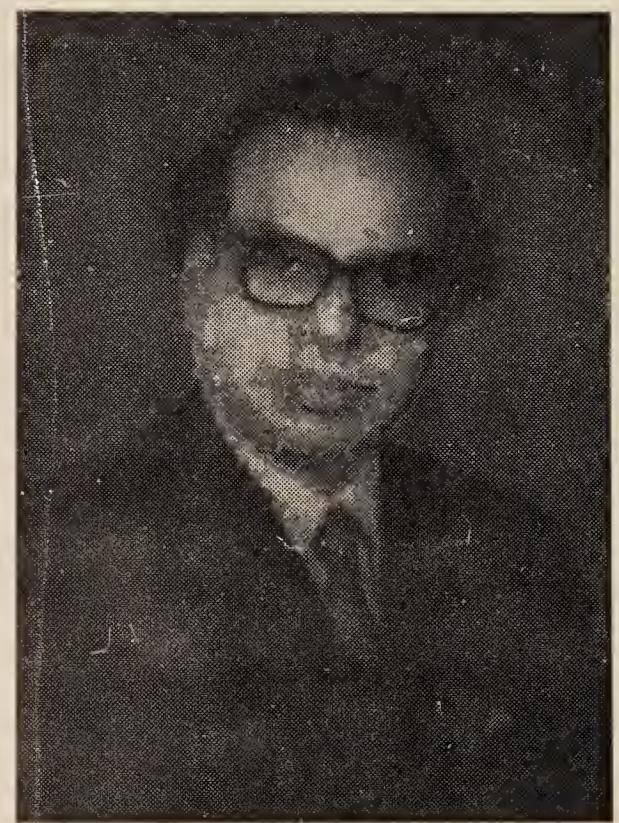
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NORTH-EASTERN REGION







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